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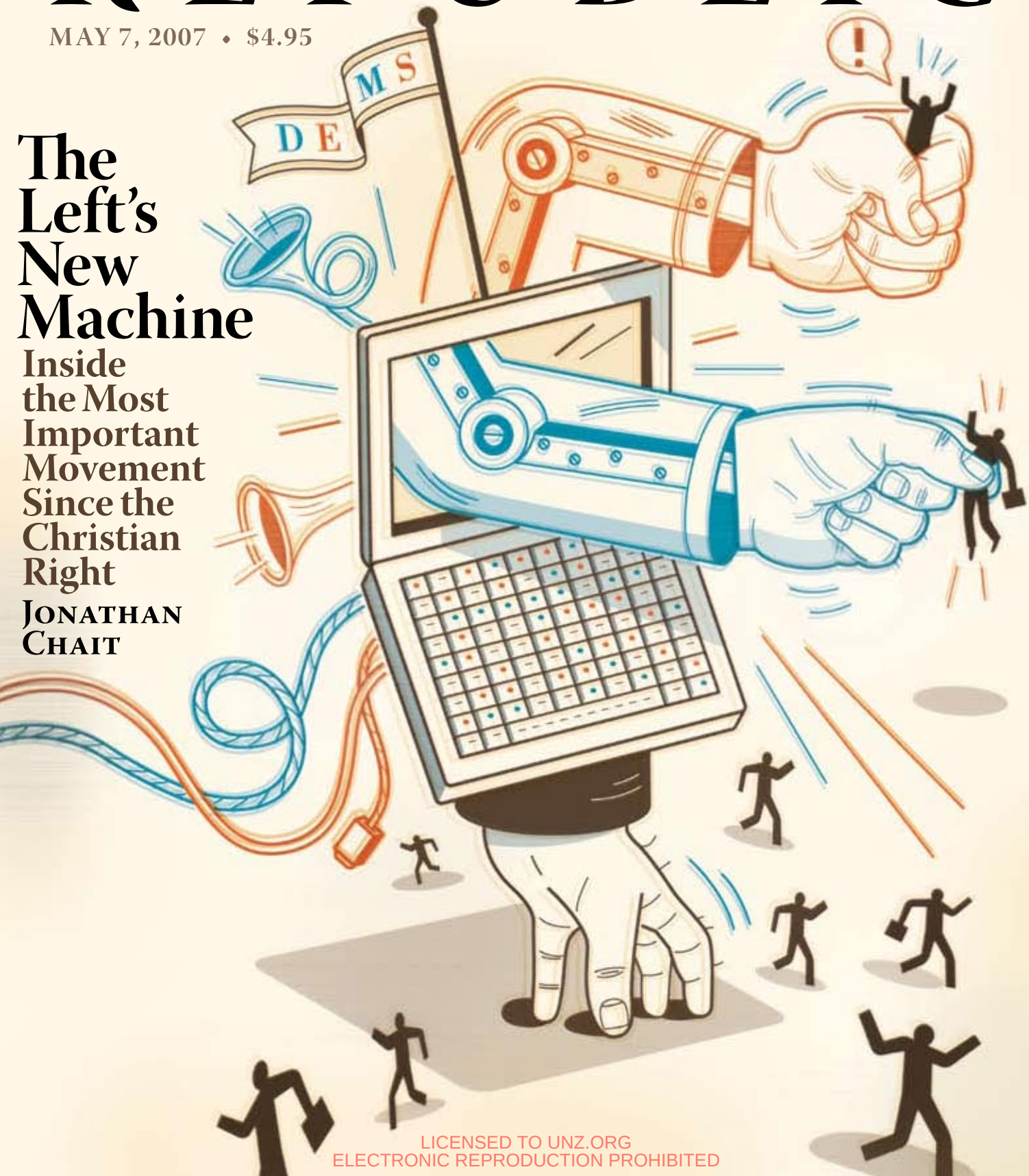

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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Bad Cop

Last november, as Democrats rode a wave of war fatigue into office, one thing finally seemed clear: The hour of withdrawal was nearing. Even the bipartisan Iraq Study Group was busy studying how to throw in the towel gently. For people who hated the war, the election promised clarity on the direction the country should move in when it came to Iraq—namely, toward the exit.

Six months later, the new Democratic Congress is in a frustrating standoff with the White House. George W. Bush refuses to sign legislation imposing timelines on the U.S. occupation—at press time, he was set to veto the first such bill. And Democrats, who campaigned for a swift end to the war, have been bickering over timelines and resolutions while reluctantly coughing up money to continue the war. It all looks rather futile. A public that expected clarity on the war is getting nothing but mixed signals. That, however, may be the most we can hope for given the circumstances.

One group with no patience for this muddle is Republicans (plus Joe Lieberman), who complain that Democrats are demoralizing the troops and emboldening the enemy. In fact, quite by accident, the Democrats have introduced just the level of uncertainty we need to influence the Iraqi government. It took Bush's secretary of defense, of all people, to make this point: "The debate in Congress," Robert Gates said this month, "has been helpful in demonstrating to the Iraqis that American patience has been limited." Thanks to Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi, he explained, Iraqis now understand "that this is not an open-ended commitment." That understanding is critical to anything even resembling success in Iraq. As General David Petraeus has said, the war cannot be won militarily; only political compromise among warring Iraqi factions will lead to security and stability.

Another group displeased with this unintended good-cop, bad-cop policy is opponents of the war. They have discovered, just as Newt Gingrich did a dozen years before, that it's extremely difficult for Congress to govern the country over the opposition of the president. Given that the Democrats have slim margins in both houses, and that the executive branch has enormous control over foreign policy, ending the war in six months is not a realistic goal—and not desirable.

The situation in Iraq does look marginally less grim than it did before General Petraeus took charge. When flunkies of Moqtada Al Sadr left the Iraqi government to protest the U.S. occupation, Prime Minister Nuri Al Maliki, who was installed with Sadr's support, stood his ground and survived. The surge has reduced death squad executions (if not spectacular car bombings). The government has made some progress toward a crucial agreement to distribute national oil revenue.

Moreover, the conduct of the war is now no longer in the hands of ideologues and incompetents. Following a string of bungling commanders in Iraq, Petraeus, the Army's leading counterinsurgency expert who brought security to Mosul, is in charge. The new U.S. ambassador to Iraq, Ryan Crocker, is one of the country's most experienced Middle East diplomats (and one who predicted sectarian chaos before the war began). Gates has so far been more than just a Cheney apparatchik, as evidenced by his off-message comments about the useful pressure provided by Democrats. And Condoleezza Rice's planned return to the Middle East next month to meet with representatives from Iraq's neighbors suggests a promising degree of administration engagement. The flurry of military and diplomatic activity that accompanies the surge is cause for—well, perhaps not optimism per se, but at least something more than utter hopelessness.

The prospects of a passable political solution are remote but real, and the consequences of withdrawing without one are dire. One last try, therefore, seems worthwhile. Moreover, what the administration and its defenders won't admit is that Democratic opposition is one of the things that just might make the new strategy plausible.

If the Democrats had the White House right now, they would be in a position to make radical changes on Iraq policy—say, redeploying troops from the major cities to an over-the-horizon force tasked with protecting refugees and destroying Al Qaeda cells. But they don't have the White House, and the power of the purse turns out to be a frustratingly blunt instrument. Given the stubborn intransigence of the Bush administration, war policy via gridlock is far from the worst course.

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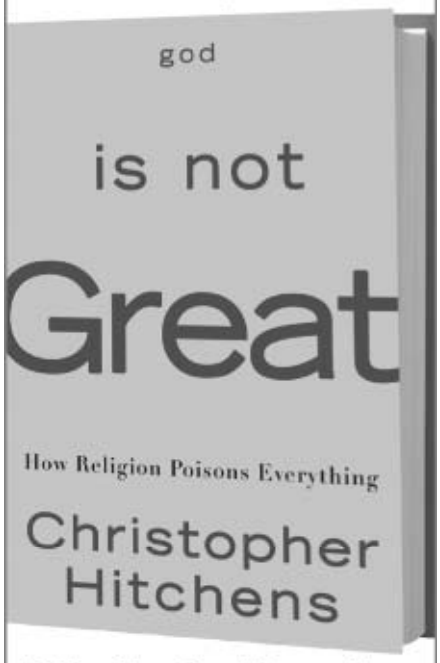

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Chris Dodd's Low-Carb Diet

Sometimes it seems like Chris Dodd would have to appear in a string bikini on "Girls Gone Wild" to garner press for his presidential campaign. But, last week in New Hampshire, he did something even bolder: During a speech on energy policy, he suggested that the best way to wean the country off fossil fuels was to institute a tax on carbon—an idea that, among politicians, only Al Gore has dared to suggest. Later, a stunned George Stephanopoulos asked Dodd: "Are you worried, when you talk about taxes, that you're leading with your chin?"

As they weigh the best means to stave off global warming, congressional Democrats have generally rallied around some variant of a cap-and-trade regime, which would set a national limit on carbon emissions and allow companies to buy and sell pollution credits. It's a reasonable idea that worked with acid-rain legislation in the 1990s, but it also has problems. Europe's carbon-trading program has suffered setbacks over the last few years, as businesses learn to exploit loopholes in the regime or lobby for extra pollution allowances.

With that in mind, many environmentalists and economists now favor a carbon tax as a quicker and more efficient way to encourage energy conservation and reduce fossil fuel consumption by raising prices. (Some advocate combining it with a payroll tax cut to ease the pain on consumers.) Because it's more transparent, a tax would be harder for companies to game.

But the idea tends to be unpopular among politicians. Most Republicans would sooner chop off their right arms than raise taxes. Democrats still recall the thumping they received in 1993 after passing a simple BTU tax in the House. Companies like G.E. and DuPont, meanwhile, are mainly supporting a cap-and-trade bill because they expect to profit from it.

All of which explains why Barbara Boxer has pointedly ruled out a carbon tax as she pushes to introduce climate-change legislation in the Senate. But Boxer is thinking of the present when she should be looking to the future. Even if Bush does sign a cap-and-trade bill, it will almost certainly be one that is too weak to make a real dent in the problem. And Democrats and moderate Republicans do not have the votes to override a Bush veto. So real progress on the issue is not likely to happen until January 2009. Two years is a long time, and, with the conversation on global warming shifting so rapidly, the unthinkable could soon become quite feasible. In other words, laying the groundwork now for a carbon tax is a sound idea. At the very least, if enough Democrats start murmuring about a carbon tax, it might persuade nervous corporations to embrace cap-and-trade as the "moderate" alternative. So, while Dodd's leading with his chin, it might not be a bad idea if more of his colleagues had his back. ◆

JIM PICKERELL/STOCK CONNECTION WORLDWIDE/NEWSCOM

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Character Flaw

Republicans go weak-kneed for tough guys.

JONATHAN CHAIT

Of all the low points during the Bush administration, perhaps the most surreal was the week in December 2004 when Bernie Kerik was poised to become secretary of Homeland Security. By the traditional measures used to judge qualifications for this sort of job, Kerik was not an ideal candidate. The main points in Kerik's favor were his loyal service to Rudy Giuliani, first as driver for his mayoral campaign, then corrections commissioner, then police commissioner—the last of which was commemorated by the casting of 30 Kerik busts. On the negative side of the ledger were his multiple alleged felonies, including tax evasion and conspiracy to commit wiretapping (currently being investigated by federal prosecutors), and his (also alleged) ties to the DeCavalcante and Gambino crime families.

If a "Sopranos" writer proposed a plotline in which a Kerik-like figure rose through the ranks to become head of the department charged with preventing the next terrorist attack, he would be laughed off the show. So how did it almost happen in real life? *The Washington Post* recently reconstructed the Kerik nomination: The decisive factor seemed to be that Bush was "lulled by Kerik's swaggering Sept. 11 reputation."

That last sentence is, in many ways, the perfect epigraph for the Bush presidency. The Kerik episode displayed many of the pathologies of modern Republican governance: incompetence, corruption, an obsession with loyalty over traditional qualifications. But it shows with particular clarity Bush's most distinct contribution: the mistaking of macho bluster for strategic acumen.

The error Bush made in judging Kerik is, of course, the same error the country as a whole made in judging Bush. We (or most Americans, anyway) were lulled by the president's swaggering September 11 reputation, by the image of him finding his voice in the rubble of Ground Zero. Of course, it turns out that understanding how to lead the war against terrorism requires more than standing on a pile of rubble and talking tough. A certain level of intellectual depth and curiosity is needed. You not only need to want to kill the bad guys, you need to know *which* bad guys to kill, and you need to have some kind of plan for what happens after you're left occupying their large, strategically vital, anti-American, ethnically riven failed state.

Alas, Republicans seem to be making the same exact mistake again. Exhibit A is the leading GOP candidate, Giuliani. Republicans love Giuliani, of course, for the same reason they loved Bush: He's a 9/11 tough guy. Recently, GOP consultant Roger Stone explained the basis of Giuliani's appeal to Texas Republicans. "Stylistically, Texans like the Giuliani swagger," Stone told *The Wall Street Journal*. "He's a tough guy, and Texans like tough guys."

The war on terrorism, boasts Giuliani, "is something I understand better than anyone else running for president." This would be very scary if it were true. In recent weeks, Giuliani mistakenly said that it was unclear whether North Korea was further along toward a nuclear bomb than Iran, casually lumped together Shia Iran and Sunni Al Qaeda, and confessed he didn't know enough about the Bush administration's approach to terrorism detainees to take a position. In fact, Giuliani wasn't even a particularly good terrorism fighter as mayor. A mere six years after the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, he decided to locate the city's emergency headquarters in the World Trade Center itself—the one spot in all New York City he knew had been targeted for attack. He also failed to ensure that police and firefighters could communicate with one another, with disastrous results.

But Giuliani isn't really saying he has the most expertise fighting terrorism. (After all, he has never held office beyond the municipal level.) Rather, he's trying to conjure the glow that Bush himself had in the days after September 11. Bush, his adoring fans used to say, "got it." To "get it" meant you had some metaphysical understanding of the war that transcended—indeed, was largely incompatible with—any actual knowledge. To the extent that "it" meant anything specific, it was the understanding that the war on terrorism was a war, not a police action, requiring land invasions of countries like Iraq. Most conservatives have quietly backed away from this particular vision, but the larger notion that the president must be a swaggering tough guy remains.

So, while Giuliani's boast may be absurd by my standards—he thinks he understands the war on terrorism better than, say, Joe Biden?—by Republican standards, it's simply obvious. Giuliani may not have any expertise as a war leader, but he excels at *acting* like one.

Now, it's perfectly natural to want a charismatic presidential candidate. The trouble is that Republicans seem to have completely lost sight of the difference between the apparent and the real. The reductio ad absurdum of this trend is the burgeoning candidacy of TV star Fred Thompson, who plays the part of a tough prosecutor and alpha male on "Law & Order."

Robert Novak recently noted, approvingly, that "[s]ophisticated social conservative activists" are flocking to Thompson. "Their appreciation of him," wrote Novak, "stems not from his eight years as a U.S. senator from Tennessee but his actor's role as district attorney of Manhattan on 'Law & Order.'" If this is how sophisticated social conservative activists make their political judgments, I'd hate to see the unsophisticated ones.

Representative Zach Wamp, a Thompson backer, recently said that Thompson is smart to delay his campaign and rely instead on the free publicity of "Law & Order" reruns. "You are able to frame the message and you are not caught up in all the controversy," he said.

The "message" is Thompson's fictional tough-guy persona. The "controversy" is, well, real life. Thompson's most prominent actual legal experience was, in fact, a disaster. As chairman of the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee in 1997, he dramatically claimed to have found evidence that the Chinese government had bribed the Clinton administration. But, over the course of the hearings, Thompson was able to prove nothing of the sort, and the affair proved a total humiliation.

If Thompson's TV character were a bumbler who brought unfounded charges against innocent people, nobody would be touting him for president. But screwing things up is not an impediment to winning the GOP nomination, as long as it only happens in real life. ◆

TRB
From Washington

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CORRESPONDENCE

Rule Britannia

I must respond to Johann Hari's despicable and cowardly attack on me in your pages—cowardly because he knows that if he called me a white supremacist in a British publication, I would sue him for libel and doubtless take tens of thousands of pounds off him for the entirely undeserved slur ("White Man for the Job," April 23). I do not have links to white supremacism. In 2001, as the biographer of Lord Salisbury, I spent an evening giving an historical speech on the founding of the town of Salisbury (now Harare) in Zimbabwe at a dinner of expat South Africans, where I recall no racist remarks of any kind being made. Far from being "silenced" by my father's business career, I am incredibly proud of his achievements in the British army, Oxford University, our century-old family-owned dairy, and the British fast-food industry. In my book *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples since 1900*, which Hari clearly hasn't read, I write in positive terms about U.S. fast food. The reason that Caroline Elkins has attacked me as "incredibly dangerous and frightening" is that I take issue with her in my book over her absurd figure of up to 400,000 supposedly killed in the Mau-Mau Emergency, when almost all other historians put it at less than one-tenth of that total. I have never approved of massacring civilians, and it is disgraceful of Hari to suggest otherwise. Also, it is a mark of Hari's sloppiness that he has accused me of telling President Bush that internment was pursued successfully in Northern Ireland in the 1970s, when in fact I said Southern Ireland in the 1930s and 1940s. I am also doubtful that Professor Amartya Sen really told Hari that no "substantial famine[s]" took place after 1947 in the areas of the Indian subcontinent formerly ruled by Great Britain, since Sen himself has written a book on the 1974–1975 Bangladesh famine, which claimed the lives of more than one million people. As for accusing me of Holocaust denial over the Boer war concentration camps, my methodology is fully set out in my life of Lord Salisbury, which Hari has also clearly not read. It is also, in my view, outrageous to use the word "Holocaust" in any other context than the Shoah.

As for Hari's claim that I am "mocked by all serious historians," in addition to having been elected to a Fellowship of the Royal Society of Literature, taking a First from Cambridge University in Modern History, having an honorary doctorate from a U.S. university, and winning International PEN's Silver Pen award, I have also won Great Britain's foremost award for nonfiction, the Wolfson History Prize. If that's being mocked, please can I have more of it?

Andrew Roberts
Author, A History of the English-Speaking peoples since 1900

Johann Hari responds:

Andrew Roberts's letter is extraordinarily helpful, since it demonstrates precisely the defects I was describing in my article. Allow me to deal with just a few. First: Roberts seems not to realize that the Springbok Club—a group he toasted as "the heir to previous imperial achievements" on the anniversary of Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence—is a white supremacist organization. Perhaps he should have noticed the flag of apartheid South Africa, which was flown at the meeting he addressed. Perhaps he should have looked at the organization's founding statements, which call for "the re-establishment of civilised European rule throughout the African continent." The fact that Roberts apparently did not sense any racism at an explicitly, aggressively racist meeting under a white-supremacist flag to mark the anniversary of a white-supremacist declaration reinforces my point, rather than rebutting it. Second: It seems that it is Roberts, not I, who has not read his book. If he turns to pages 151–153, he will find a passage arguing that, after the Amritsar massacre—of unarmed civilians—"it was not necessary for another shot to be fired throughout the entire region." He then claims that, if General Reginald Dyer had not massacred the civilians at Amritsar, "many more than 379 people would have lost their lives." Then he describes Indians as grateful to Dyer for the massacre and complains that Dyer was in a terrible bind where massacring civilians and not massacring civilians would have been equally problematic: "[M]oderation was taken advantage of as weakness while severity was denounced as murder." Isn't it a defense of killing civilians to claim that the Amritsar massacre was "necessary" and successful in saving lives? Third: Roberts can only use Nobel Prize–winning economist Amartya Sen to defend himself by misparaphrasing him. Sen said that India, as a democratic republic, had not suffered any famines since the British left. Roberts tries to wriggle out of this by claiming Sen was talking about the entire Indian subcontinent, so he can drag in a famine in a different country: Bangladesh. Fourth: On the Boer concentration camps, turn to page 31 of Roberts's most recent book. Roberts dismisses the "war crime" against the Boers in scare quotes and refers to the abuse that killed more than 35,000 people as "the supposed ill-treatment of the women and children in camps there." He claims the victims died because they were too stupid to take medicine. In reality, they had been burned out of their homes by a prime minister who said they should be forced as far from where they lived as possible because "the further the Boer families are taken from their homes the more they will feel it." Fifth: Both at his lunch with President Bush and in a speech to the Heritage Foundation, Roberts said internment worked "in Ireland," without specifying a period of Irish history. His audience cannot be expected to hear subclauses that were not voiced out loud. I suspect this is a retrospective narrowing of Roberts's words after some of them were shown to be absurd.

Finally: Roberts can only defend himself from the charge that he is mocked by "almost all serious historians" by deliberately misquoting it. He prefers to change my words to a strawman claim that he is "mocked by all serious historians," a charge I did not make. Of course there are a few historians located on the far right—or those prepared to reward it periodically in order to appear balanced—who choose to laud Roberts. If this is Roberts's way with quotations and sources, it is no wonder his histories are so radically divergent from the truth.

A more complete version of this exchange is available at tnr.com.

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS: Please note that our April 23, 2007, issue should have been labeled Vol. 236, Number 14 instead of Vol. 236, Number 12. We regret the error. ◆

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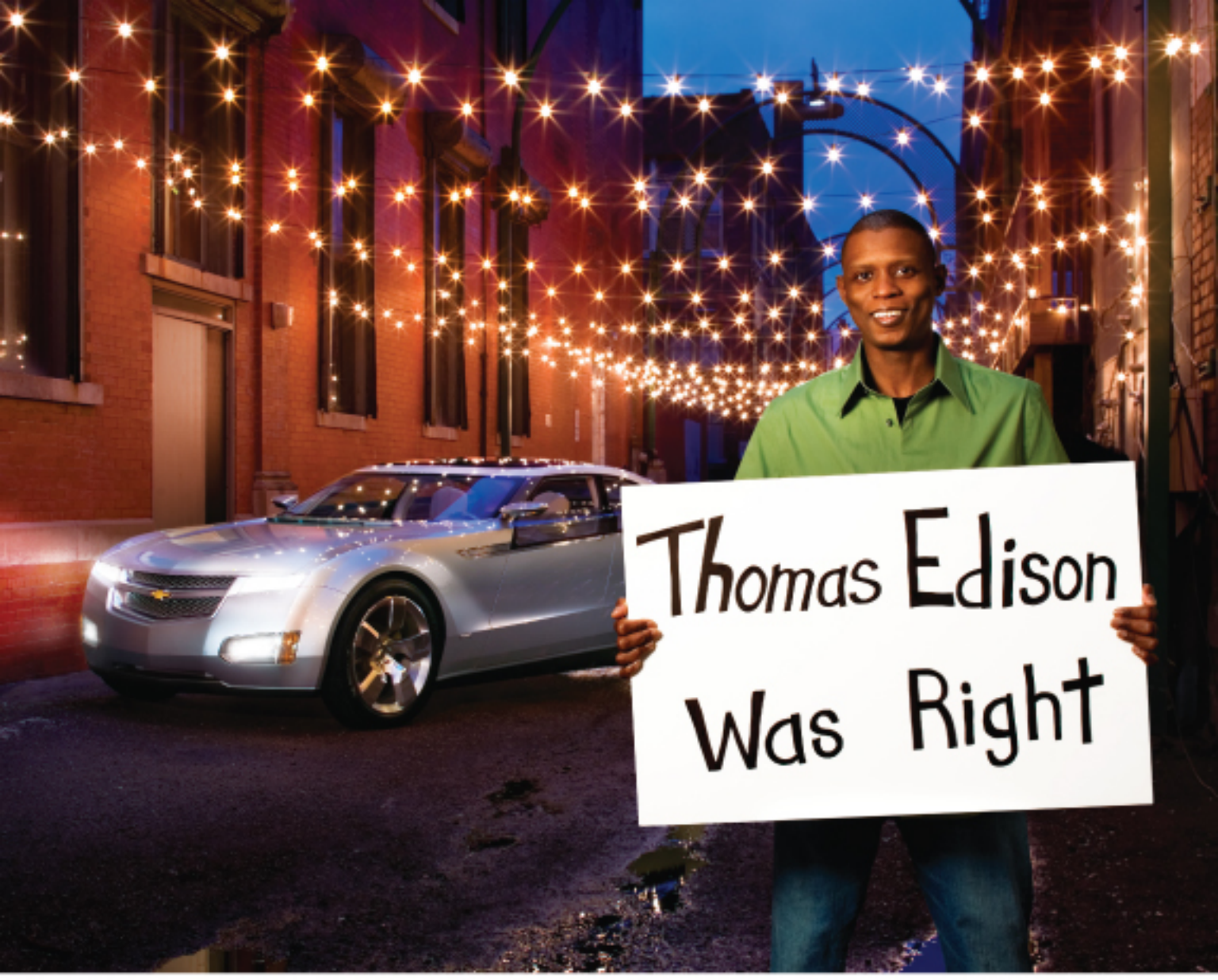

Imagine a car that plugs into an electric socket. One that uses zero gasoline and produces zero emissions. Thomas Edison imagined it, or something like it, over 100 hundred years ago. Today, I'm helping to bring it to life in GM's landmark Chevy Volt— a four passenger concept vehicle that will be powered by GM's E-Flex propulsion system that will deliver 40 miles of pure electric vehicle range.

It's just one part of GM's commitment to energy diversity— creating vehicles that use fuels from diverse sources, reducing our dependence on petroleum and lowering emissions. I'm part of the team in Detroit that's working on a transformation in vehicles today.

Jelani Aliyu

Jelani Aliyu

Lead Creative Designer, Chevrolet Volt

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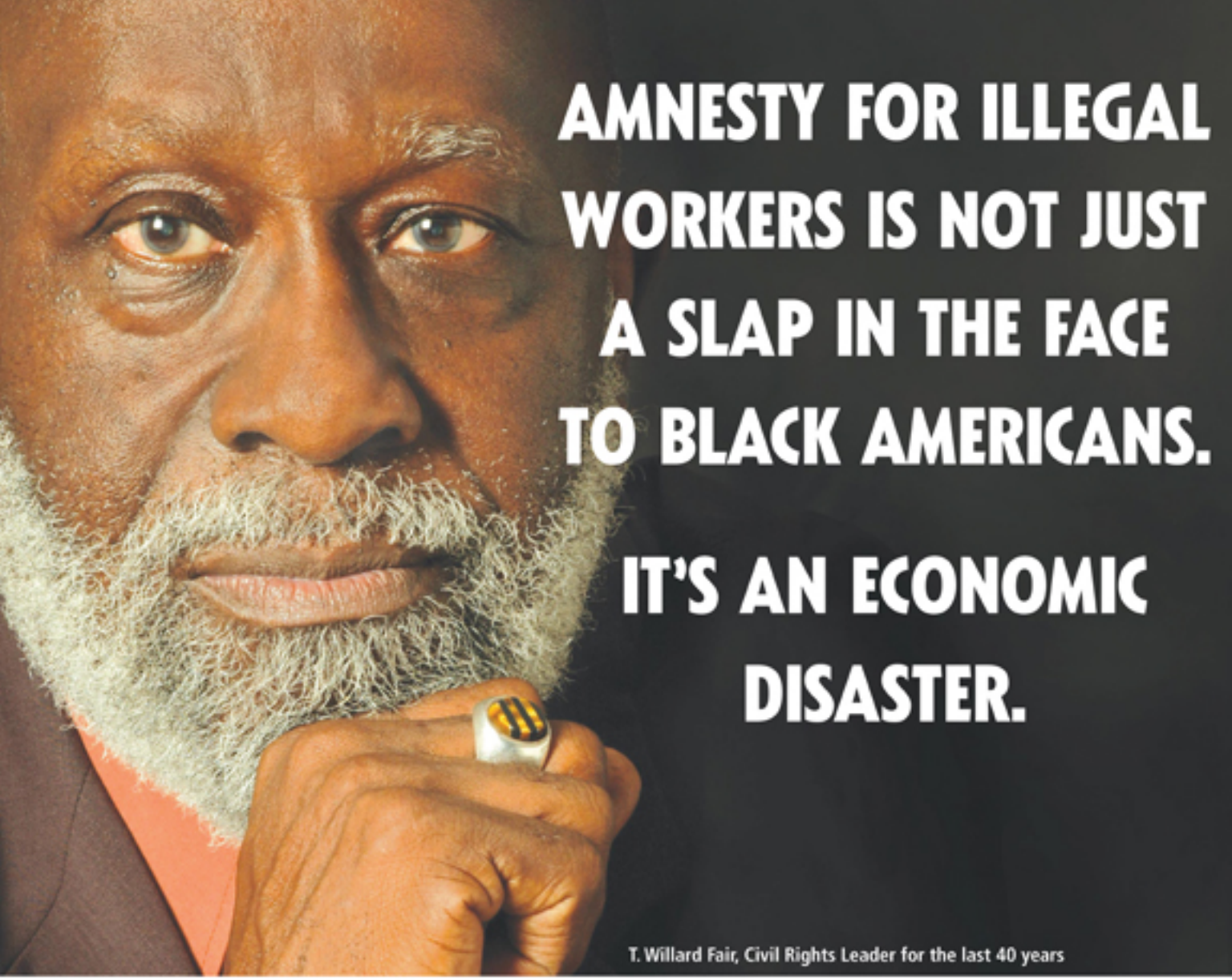
AMNESTY FOR ILLEGAL WORKERS IS NOT JUST A SLAP IN THE FACE TO BLACK AMERICANS.
IT'S AN ECONOMIC DISASTER.
T. Willard Fair, Civil Rights Leader for the last 40 years

My mission for 40 years has been to train Black Americans and find jobs for them. But it has become mission impossible as the government allows more and more jobs to be filled by legal and illegal foreign workers. Now Congress is considering amnesty for millions of illegal foreign workers. Some members see it as an easy way to get votes; some as cheap labor for their supporters. But to Black Americans, amnesty is an immoral seizure of our jobs.

Black Americans have lost hundreds of thousands of jobs to foreign workers willing to work for next to nothing. And the hiring of low-skilled immigrants is responsible for 40% of the decline in employment among Black American men.* Amnesty for illegal workers will further devastate many of our communities. Around 40% of Black American men are without a job today. Why would anybody favor giving American jobs to MORE foreign workers – especially illegal ones?

Coalition For The Future American Worker
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*Source: National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 12518

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Black Hole

The other Guantánamo.

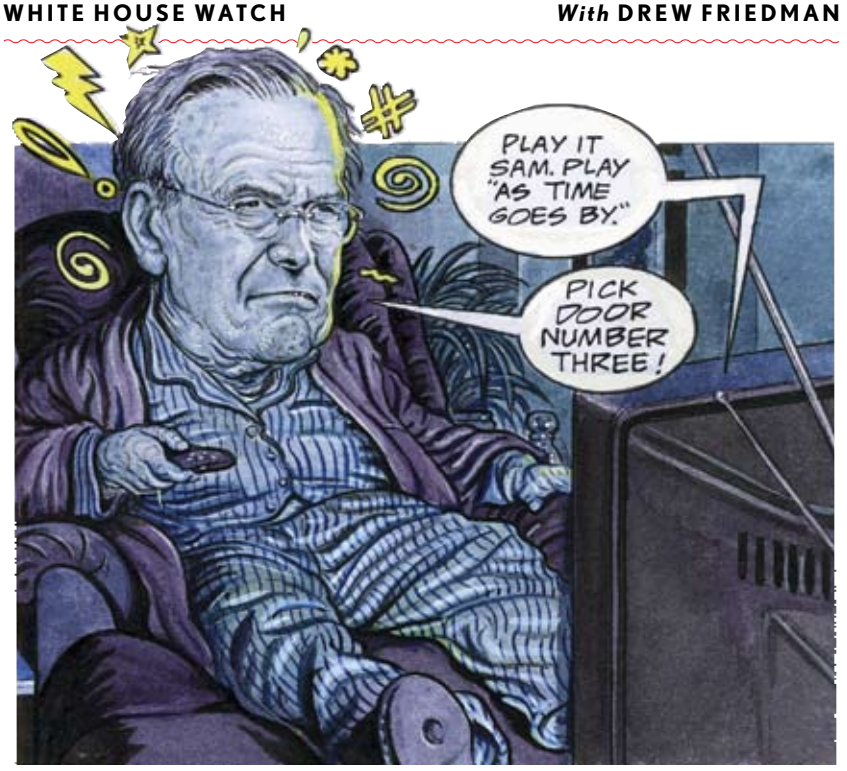
Early last spring, outside a guesthouse in Kabul where I was staying, an injured Afghan man limped up to the locked gate. He wore a blazer with suede elbow patches and leaned on crutches. Because a suicide bomber had attacked the building not long before, a guard blocked the entrance of the unannounced supplicant. The fact that the man refused to give his name didn't help his case. But, finally, once inside, he blurted his reason for traveling across a war zone to the building: He had heard that American lawyers with whom I was traveling were staying there and that these lawyers wanted to represent prisoners held by the Americans at Bagram Airbase, some 40 miles north. "My son is in prison at Bagram," the man said, clutching a cell phone: A sympathetic Afghan guard inside Bagram Theater Internment Facility (BTIF) had sent him a photograph of his son after he had been badly beaten, his eye swollen shut.

BTIF is currently home to about 650 detainees. Unlike the prison in Guantánamo, there aren't congressional junkets regularly touring the facility, let alone any reporters. Inside one of the low-slung, pale concrete buildings, on the vast floor of what was once a machine shop, is a scene one former interrogator describes as a dungeon, full of "medieval sounds"—the dragging of leg shackles, shouts from military police. Most of its windows, initially installed by the Soviet army, are broken and boarded up. There are six large 60-foot-long cages ringed in coiled barbed wire where detainees are kept, 15 to 20 prisoners to a cage. Before the prisoners enter or leave these cages, they are transferred temporarily to cages large enough for only one prisoner called "sally ports," which are encased in coils of concertina wire and reinforced with steel beams. On a level above the machine shop floor, there are isolation rooms walled in plywood with chicken-wire ceilings.

The man had come to the guest house on bad information. The lawyers with whom I traveled represented prisoners in Guantánamo, and they weren't seeking new clients from Bagram. As the man took in this depressing fact, he grew irate and began pressing his case with even greater fervor. "There are more photographs," he exclaimed, turning to leave. "Someday, you will see them."

That day may be fast approaching. The photos accompanying this piece are the first to be published from inside the prison. Last month, lawyers pleaded two separate cases before the D.C. District Court, demanding that the justices review petitions of habeas corpus for Bagram detainees. These cases represent the rare moment when Bagram will actually receive scrutiny. Unlike Guantánamo, a puddle-jumper away from Miami, Bagram is tucked into the Afghan countryside, not far from where combat with the Taliban still flares. And this remoteness has made the plight of its prisoners all the more dire: Only the International Committee of the Red Cross knows the names of Bagram's occupants. Eric Lewis, a co-counsel in one of the habeas cases, says, "The nightmare of Guantánamo is something of a picnic compared to Bagram," a fact that prisoners can relate with firsthand knowledge: A good portion of the detainees in Guantánamo were first held in Bagram. "Our clients were beaten more badly in Afghanistan than in Guantánamo, basi-

WHITE HOUSE WATCH ***With*** **DREW FRIEDMAN**



Donald Rumsfeld finds retirement brimming with challenges.

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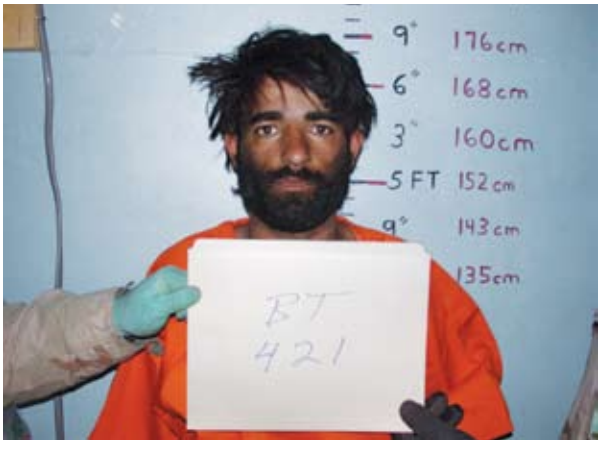

The first ever published photo of Bagram prison's interior: A "sally port" (above) holds detainees before their transfer to cage cells. Before this stage, they are processed (left) in more traditional fashion.

cally because, in Cuba, the whole world is watching," says Lewis.

Bagram is a 6.5-square-mile plot located on the vast, once-verdant Shomali plain and encircled by the snowy Panjshir mountains. After the Soviet invasion in the late '70s, the Russians built a two-mile runway and airbase at Bagram. During the decades of civil war, the defunct base repeatedly switched between Taliban and Northern Alliance control. In late 2001, as it trounced the Taliban, the United States took possession of the base and outfitted its cavernous machine shop to detain captured combatants. Former prisoners and interrogators say that there were old Soviet signs written in Cyrillic still on the walls.

The detention facility was designed as a short-term collection point, where American interrogators sorted erroneous and low-level captures from those of higher intelligence value. And, at first, the prison actually served this purpose: Detainees from Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and North Africa were transported to Guantánamo—although there are still some Arabs held at Bagram. (We know this, in part, because a Yemeni prisoner, held virtually incommunicado for more than five years, sent his father a letter through the Red Cross. "BT," meaning Bagram Theater, was marked on the upper-left-hand corner.)

From the start, the processing of prisoners entailed some grisly practices. When Captain Carolyn Wood assumed control of the prison in the summer of 2002—she ran it until taking over Abu Ghraib a year later—interrogation tactics came to include beatings, anal violation with sharp objects, blows to the genitals, and "peroneal" strikes (an incapacitating blow to the leg with a baton, a knee, or a shin). We know about these tactics because an internal Army investigation into two prisoner deaths was obtained by *The New York Times*. These detainees—a 22-year-old taxi driver and the brother of a Taliban commander—were found dead and hanging from the wrists by shackles. A coroner's report said the two men died after being subjected to dozens of peroneal strikes. According to the coroner's report, the "pulpified" legs of one of the corpses looked as if they had "been run over by a bus."

During these early years, one of the most notorious figures at the prison was Private First Class Damien M. Corsetti, known in turns as the "King of Torture" and "Monster." Corsetti tattooed an Italian translation of the latter moniker across his stomach. In the end, a military tribunal cleared Corsetti of all charges. His lawyer successfully argued before the tribunal that the rules for detainee treatment were unclear: "The president of the United States doesn't know what the rules are. The secretary of defense doesn't know what the rules are. But the government expects this Pfc. to know what the rules are?" But, in the course of proving his innocence, Corsetti revealed several damning details. One of the prisoners he called to testify on his behalf told the military judges that a Saudi detainee recounted how Corsetti had threatened to rape him. He had even taken out his penis and yelled, "This is your God!"

It's not that Bagram has entirely escaped scrutiny. Army investigators have recommended criminal charges for 27 alleged Bagram-based torturers. But, of these 27, only four soldiers have been sentenced to prison time—for no more than several months. The alleged abusers have evaded punishment largely with the help of, among others, Donald Rumsfeld, who approved a December 2002 memorandum that permitted the use of stripping, dogs, and stress positions in interrogations. In fact, many of the top brass who presided over Bagram have done more than escape punishment. Despite the many accounts of Captain Wood's encourage-

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About Your Professor

Dr. Richard Wolfson (Ph.D., Dartmouth College) is Professor of Physics at Middlebury College in New England. Decades of teaching at Middlebury, with its strong emphasis on the humanities, have made him an expert at demonstrating the logic and significance of physics to students from many fields. His writings have appeared in *Scientific American*. He is author of *Physics for Scientists and Engineers*.

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ment of torture—Amnesty International has called her a "torture architect"—she has received two Bronze Stars.

While Bagram began as a temporary jail, it has over time morphed into a more permanent facility. As the bulk of its Arab prisoners were shipped to Guantánamo, it increasingly held Afghans for long (and in many cases indefinite) terms. "One of the worst aspects of Bagram is that no one knows how long they'll be held there," says Sam Zia-Zarifi, the research director for the Asia division of Human Rights Watch. The secrecy shrouding the prison makes it hard to discern the precise composition of its occupants. But we do know that, last year, its population swelled by about 100 detainees, thanks to new U.S.-NATO operations aimed at routing the resurgent Taliban. And even the Pentagon has implicitly conceded that the prison no longer serves its initial short-term purpose, changing its name from Bagram Collection Point to the Bagram Theater Internment Facility.

During this transformation, some of the worst abuses at Bagram, such as anal violations and beatings, have been curbed, according to former detainees, the Afghan Human Rights Commission, and Human Rights Watch. The Department of Defense claims that prisoners now gain an average of 15 pounds during their detention. And, several weeks ago, the first Afghan prisoners were transferred from Bagram into Afghan custody in the U.S.-built wing of the infamous Policharki prison. Lieutenant Colonel Todd Vician, a spokesman for the Department of Defense, tells me, "We have no desire to be the world's jailer."

But, for all these changes, the growing detainee population still lives in overcrowded cages. Prisoners don't even have the limited access to lawyers available to prisoners in Guantánamo. Nor do they have the right to Combatant Status Review Tribunals, which Guantánamo detainees won in the 2004 Supreme Court ruling in *Hamdi* v. *Rumsfeld*. Instead, if a combat commander chooses, he can convene an Enemy Combatant Review Board (ECRB), at which the detainee has no right to a personal advocate, no chance to speak in his own defense, and no opportunity to review the evidence against him. The detainee isn't even allowed to attend. And, thanks to such limited access to justice, many former detainees say they have no idea why they were either detained or released.

With a victory in the pending habeas cases, Bagram detainees might eventually win the same legal rights now held by Guantánamo prisoners. But, according to Tina Foster, executive director of the International Justice Network and co-counsel on the habeas petitions, "Even if the cases are successful, we are unlikely to see dramatic changes at Bagram any time soon." It will remain too far from the public eye, too deep in a war zone, to receive the public pressure that forced the reform of Guantánamo. That's a shame, because the prison—and, more precisely, its infamy—has hurt the American cause in Afghanistan. "[It] undermines our legitimacy in building democracy and human rights in Afghanistan," says Barnett Rubin, director of studies at New York University's Center on International Cooperation.

I began to understand this cost as I sat in the Kabul guesthouse with the American lawyers. Over a cup of tea, one local official named Zalmay Shah told us that he had once worked closely with U.S. Special Forces. At the beginning of the U.S. invasion, he had helped a commander named "Tony" round up a handful of midlevel Taliban. The soldiers had awarded him a letter of commendation for his efforts, and he developed a sincere affection for the Americans. That soon changed.

While delivering one wanted man into U.S. custody, Shah was himself arrested, hooded, shackled, and stripped. Soldiers taped his mouth shut, refusing to let him spit out the snuff he was chewing. For three days, his jailers in Bagram denied him food. All the while, Shah pleaded his innocence and reminded the Americans of his friendship with "Tony." And, eventually, the Americans concluded that they had mistakenly identified the man as a Taliban official and released him. Despite all this, the U.S. military has continued to ask Shah for his help. "I have refused," he told us. "When the Americans came, we thought we would be free. But, on the contrary, we have suffered." Placing his elbows on the table, he hunched forward and cupped his hands around the now cold tea. "If the Americans don't change their policies soon, neither we nor they will have a way out."

Eliza Griswold

Eliza Griswold is currently a Nieman Fellow in journalism at Harvard University. Her first book of poems, Wideawake Field, will be published in May, and she is at work on a nonfiction book, The Tenth Parallel.

WASHINGTON READ: POTTY TALK

"[Bill Clinton] looks drawn and shrunken. I would say he has lost thirty pounds from the last time we met. He hesitates in the lobby. This time I am positive; he has no recognition of me. If I need more evidence, a minute or two later he is following me into the restroom. . . . When the former president appears in the mirrors as he heads toward the toilets, the men washing their hands and adjusting their ties pay little attention. It is sad. I never would have thought I would feel sadness for this irrepressible ham."

—from The Clinton Crack-Up: The Boy President's Life After the White House, by R. Emmett Tyrrell Jr., founder of The American Spectator

TOMASZ WALENTA; CLINTON HEAD: REUTERS/CHIP EAST; LANDOV; TYRELL HEAD: CNN

MK Mabry

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The Gift

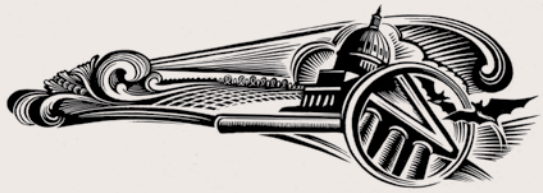
A master narrative for Iraq.

At his speech in East Grand Rapids, Michigan, last week, President Bush alluded to an observation by a Middle East scholar who had been to Iraq eight times since the beginning of the war: "A traveler who moves between Baghdad and Washington is struck by the gloomy despair in Washington and the cautious sense of optimism in Baghdad." The president's use of Fouad Ajami as his witness is a first strike, certainly among our readers, against the most learned American writing about the *situation*. It was natural for Bush to rivet onto even so hesitant a hopeful reading of the outcome of the struggles among Iraqis and between some Iraqis and U.S. forces. Still, the president's appropriation of Ajami's words does not nearly recognize the complex interpretive history he was trying to tell.

There are two recent articles by Ajami recounting a narrative that delves deep into Iraq's past. The first essay was in *The Wall Street Journal* of April 11. The second, a long review of a book by Ali A. Allawi called *The Occupation of Iraq: Winning the War, Losing the Peace*, was in the most recent issue of The New Republic. Together they are 10,000 words—beautiful writing, as it is always with Ajami, whether he is writing about the darkness of the Middle East or, in the rare instances when he can, about some light. He does not skirt America's errors in Iraq, and he knows them all. Indeed, he knows them not just as the tactical mistakes of Bremer and Khalilzad but as lumbering strategic—and sometimes even moral—errors inserted into the path of the whole saga of modern Mesopotamia.

There may be very little inevitability in history. But one thing is for sure. The Shia, who constitute maybe 65 percent of Iraq—long brutalized and repressed, and several hundred thousand of whom were murdered in Saddam Hussein's tenure—will not let the cup of power pass from their lips. Not strangely at all, there is no just theory of government that would prescribe that they should.

This is the nub of the controversy. As soon as Saddam's bronze head fell and the Baath Party with it, there emerged among the newly freed a demand for de-Baathification, a purge of the totalitarian agents, grand and petty, who ruled the country, enslaved it, and profited from it. The insistence rose from a sense of due cause, a fear of the return of the monsters, and real hatred. Hatred might not salve. But sometimes it cleanses. And,



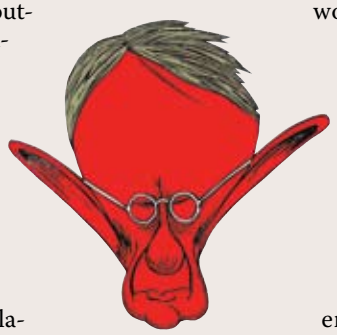
On the Hill

TRADING PLACES

Dovish hawks and hawkish doves.

One recent weekend, Michigan Senator Carl Levin traveled to Ann Arbor to give a talk to a crowd of students. The brainy Levin is known for his unabashed liberalism—he led the opposition in the Senate to authorizing the Iraq war in 2002—and, as College Democrats and antiwar protesters filed into the sunny room, it would have been fair to assume he was only among friends. But, as Levin thanked a serviceman who had stood up in the audience, the protesters held up their signs: AIPAC OWNS LEVIN.

Protesters against *Levin*, an original hero of the antiwar movement? Over the last six months, the new head of the Armed Services Committee has become an unlikely lightning rod for antiwar ire. Levin outraged old fans in February, when he told Tim Russert that some troops would have to be left in Iraq even after a pullout. "[A]fter reading his statements over the last few months, it's become clear that he doesn't get it on Iraq," lamented liberal blogger Matt Stoller of *MyDD*. Then, in April, Levin insisted that "we're not going to vote to cut funding, period" and that Democrats would ultimately have to strip the withdrawal timetable—precious to war opponents—from the supplemental budget. Hours later, a photo appeared online with the word TROOPKILLER stamped in red across Levin's grandfatherly face. Another blogger was more to the point: "Carl Levin, you suck."



Levin's not the only Hill Democrat making new enemies out of old friends. The spring season has brought with it what looks like an epidemic of Iraq flip-flop fever. Barack Obama, who forcefully opposed this "dumb" and "rash" war back in 2002, has joined Levin in suggesting he'd be willing to back off a timetable. Likewise, Al Gore, another original antiwar voice, is cautioning against a hasty withdrawal. Meanwhile, Democrats who initially supported the war—like John Kerry and Chris Dodd—have been eagerly jumping onto the strongest antiwar legislation in the Senate, Russ Feingold's new bill to limit funds for the war in 2008. But the most chattered-about Iraq makeover is the one undergone by Harry Reid.

Last December, newly minted Majority Leader Reid, a bespectacled, soft-spoken moderate from Nevada who had voted to authorize the war, decided to pursue an easy-does-it Iraq strategy that would slowly ratchet up the pressure on Senate Republicans. In February, he twice tried to send a nonbinding resolution to the floor; later that month, he assured the press that touching war funds was off the table; in March, an emergency war supplemental was drawn up with language that was more moderate than the House's, to keep centrist Democrats like Ben Nelson on board.

Then, on April 3, Reid suddenly announced—without telling his caucus first—that he was co-sponsoring Feingold's bill. Two weeks later, he pronounced that the "war is lost," causing a conservative press perpetually in search of surrender monkeys to fall all over itself with glee. At what normally would have been an utterly routine think-tank speech last Monday, he railed that Bush was in a "state of denial," irritating Dick Cheney and some moderates alike. "I don't think it's very helpful," says one aide to a moderate senator. →

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← The change was so startling that, all across the Hill, theories spawned to try and explain the leader's strange behavior. Maybe he was taking his master December plan to the next level. Or perhaps he made a straight political trade with Feingold—Feingold's vote on the supplemental for Reid's shout-out on the defunding bill. But those close to him say it came from the gut. "This is definitely Harry Reid," says a friend, "and not part of an overarching strategy."

Reid's transformation began last summer as he made calls to bereaved families while the administration's strategy floundered. "They have an impact," the friend says of the calls. "At some point, it's hard to separate the job you do from what you feel." The tipping point came on March 28, the day Reid made his first trip this year to Walter Reed. As he later told the press, what he witnessed there stunned and profoundly depressed him. He saw brain-damaged patients condemned by Iraq to live out the rest of their lives with the mental acuity of stroke victims three times their age. One 22-year veteran told Reid she had a master's degree, "but now I can't even remember my phone number." Shortly after Reid's visit to the Army hospital, he picked up his phone and called Russ Feingold.

When he took to the airwaves the following week to explain why he had decided to co-sponsor Feingold's bill, Reid spoke with the staccato, repetitive cadence of a man radioing in an SOS call. "The American people, I repeat, have to understand what is happening. It is not worth another drop of American blood in Iraq. It is not worth another damaged brain in Iraq. This is not the war President Bush said we were going into. It was a misrepresentation."

Reid's change of position appears to be a turnaround. But look more closely and there is a certain consistency in how he came to his views—and, likewise, in how Levin came to his. In the aftermath of September 11, powerful currents of solidarity and patriotism swirled through the Capitol, inspiring otherwise Bush-wary Democrats to support the president's impending war. Reid was definitely not the senator most feverishly gripped by this zeal, but it had swept him into the "yes" camp by the time of the vote, where he railed against Saddam Hussein, calling him a "third-rate thug" and declaring that he was confident that Bush "will do the right thing."

Levin, on the other hand, distrusted the high emotions after September 11—the "rhetoric and the exaggerations," as he calls them, stoked by the president. It's these emotions, he believes, that helped let colleagues look past the consequences of going to war on shoddy intelligence and against traditional international law. Now, as passions run high on the subject of withdrawal, Levin is still having misgivings—but, this time, about the consequences of cutting funding and making a hasty retreat. "We should give the Iraqis some notice, so it's not precipitous," he tells me. One of his big legislative priorities is to threaten the Iraqis with tough benchmarks to force political changes, so the ultimate U.S. withdrawal will be less of a disaster. "He has a realization that we are where we are," says Senator Chuck Hagel, who works closely with Levin.

If you think of Democrats' Iraq stances in terms of a dichotomy of pro-war or antiwar, moderate or liberal, many will appear flip-floppy—especially those like Levin and Obama, who seem, bizarrely, to be turning more moderate as things get worse. But *stylistically*, opposition to the invasion based on skepticism is consistent with moderation now on how to draw the war to an end.

The post–September 11 moment led some Democrats toward war; to get turned around 180 degrees, some of those senators have had to experience a big, horrifying realization of what that war unleashed. When I ask Levin if there was a moment—an Armed Services hearing, perhaps, or a visit with troops—that opened his eyes and altered his view of Iraq, he pauses. There has been no such thing. For him, the ride has been more level. "I'm afraid I've sort of, from the beginning, felt that this was a mistake," he says evenly. "So it's kind of hard for me to think of something that's changed that view."

Eve Fairbanks

in the case of Iraq, there was plenty of reason to hate. De-Baathification was nowhere as harsh as de-Nazification, a U.S.-initiated process in our zone of occupied Germany that, only a few months ago, a self-righteous critic of the Iraq war suggested should be undertaken in the United States. The discussion of the war is now so irrational that the same person may believe that de-Baathification is wrong in Iraq but de-Nazification is apt for our own country.

There are, of course, Shia fanatics and murderers, and they, too, kill American soldiers. But the war against a political settlement and the war against our troops is largely a Sunni phenomenon. It is suicidal. They cannot win. No way. But they might be able to drive us out.

Ajami betrays some contempt for other writers on the war: those who understand or speak no or little Arabic and thus talk as foreigners to the Iraqis; those, actually most, of the "experts" who are ignorant of the religious struggle and its social and economic consequences through the centuries; those who see the fighting as mostly an Iraqi conflict with clumsy and, worse yet, cruel American fighting men and women. His view of the U.S. presence is, by contrast, ethically and psychologically reassuring—and believable. Abu Ghraib is not the rule but a rare exception.

He does not spend his time, like other Americans and the usual contingent of derisive European journalists, under U.S. protection in the Green Zone, in exactly the same palaces where Saddam hid from his population. He sleeps where Iraqis sleep and eats where Iraqis eat.

I write about this because I think that these 10,000 words taken together give the reader a more complex and reasonable version of the war than you have gotten elsewhere. We will run the two articles on TNR ONLINE so that you can refer to them. I do not know exactly how Ajami believes this long war will end. But, from him, I do know why it is being fought.

Martin Peretz

Trigger Shy

Virginia Tech and our impoverished language for evil.

Katie Couric: "Just who was the shooter?" Charles Gibson: "Tonight—the survivors, their stories; the shooter, his background." Matt Lauer: "We've now got an identity of the shooter." Wolf Blitzer: "That is the shooter, Cho Seung-Hui."

Learning that there had been a mass

Randall Enos

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killing at Virginia Tech, many in the press began to speak of the "shooter" who had brought horror to the campus: A shooter was loose, a shooter did this, a shooter did that. On ABC, CBS, and NBC news broadcasts in the 72 hours after the tragedy, the word "shooter" was heard roughly three times as often as "killer" or "murderer."

The fact that murder had happened at Virginia Tech was clear within hours, if not minutes, of initial reports. Yet plenty of media figures could not bring themselves to say that the killer was a killer, that the murderer was a murderer. Instead, they used "shooter," a weirdly neutral term that practically sounds like a skilled trade. To call someone a "shooter" is to say he was holding a firearm that discharged, but to imply nothing about any moral choice involved or the fact that it's bad to aim a pistol at a helpless person and pull the trigger. Same goes for the word "gunman," also used frequently by journalists and pundits.

There are times when neutral words like "shooter" and "gunman" are justified. In police investigations and legal proceedings that involve the determination of guilt or innocence, dispassionate terms should be used. In news reports about accusations that have not yet gone to trial, cautious phrasing is wise. But there was no possibility that the Virginia Tech deaths were caused by legitimate use of force, mistaken identity, self-defense, or some dreadful accident; the only possible explanation was mass homicide. To call Cho a "murderer" would have been a simple statement of fact. Yet, according to a Nexis search of major U.S. newspapers and wire stories, in the three days following the massacre, 2,516 stories contained the terms "shooter" or "gunman," while just 746 used "murderer" or "killer."

And, a full week after the calamity, many news outlets—including CNN, MSNBC, and Fox News—were still referring to Cho as a "shooter."

Similarly odd was the frequent use of the phrase "shooting spree" to describe the Blacksburg horror. A spree is a gay, carefree outing. Those who say "shooting spree" make it sound as if killing at random is therapeutic, even recreational: He felt depressed, so he went on a shooting spree. The only term that fits what Cho did is "rampage," and a few reports used this word. But a disturbing number opted for "spree."

Commentators even tiptoed away from using the term "madman" to describe Cho. We don't need to be psychiatrists or even be aware of the demented materials he mailed to NBC News to determine that the Virginia Tech murderer was mentally ill. There simply are no circumstances under which a person of sound mind would slaughter 32 unarmed innocents. (Whether he was legally insane—unable to distinguish right from wrong—is a separate question. Most who suffer mental illness remain sane. Cho's suicide suggests he was sane; presumably, he killed himself to escape punishment for his crimes.) Yet, even as Cho's crazed messages and psychological-health profile have been revealed, news reports have treated the murderer's history gently. In one story, the worst *The New York Times* could bring itself to say was that the killer suffered a "troubled mental state" and "imbalance." Had the *Times* called Cho a "madman," the paper would have been criticized—for using a judgmental term about a mass murderer!

But we *should* be judgmental about murderers and others who commit moral horrors. Of course, one explanation for the popularity of terms like "shooter" may simply be that, with the proliferation of TV crime dramas, cop slang like "shooter" and "perp" has seeped into everyday language and hence into public discourse. But the larger, more troubling explanation has to do with morality. The Western press and intellectual realms were scoffing at the concept of evil long before George W. Bush cheapened the word through constant bandying. Media and thought leaders don't want to say that the man who chained the exit doors of Norris Hall before he started killing had a mind taken over by evil; they want to dismiss him as no more than a confused gunman, because they don't want to contemplate his demonstration that evil is entirely real. And so they use words like "shooter" that remove the moral dimension, making it seem like terrible events just happen—not that human wickedness causes terrible events. Many news reports spoke of the slaughter as if it had been a bad, bad car crash with no one really at fault.

That Cho became evil is distinct from whether society failed him at earlier points; you can sympathize with his earlier self and agree that someone suffering his condition deserved better care. But set aside whether evil results from psychosis—or from supernatural temptation, genetic flaws, free-will choice, trauma, poverty, wealth, or ideology: Evil exists and must be spoken of *as evil*, not in euphemism. On a windy Monday morning in Virginia, evil armed itself and performed the most despicable of acts: pleasure in the taking of innocent life. Evil will arm itself again. As George Orwell showed, unless we call a thing what it is, we can neither think about it clearly nor oppose it. GREGG EASTERBROOK

WHO'S CASHING IN THIS WEEK?

MARK MAINZ/GETTY IMAGES

Dick Gephardt (again!)

As a 2004 presidential candidate, Dick Gephardt told MoveOn.org, "I will get the oil industry lobbyists out of the Oval Office." Coal industry lobbyists, by contrast, are apparently OK, as Gephardt has now signed on with Peabody Energy to become one himself. His goal? "Avoidance of carbon caps."

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Casualty of War

Military history bites the dust.

Ask most Americans about important subjects in history, and it's a good bet that "war" will rank near the top of the list. Certainly, it holds a commanding position in the history marketed to the general public. Among the "hot books" currently listed on the website of the History Book Club, fully one-third—ranging from straightforward, popular titles like *Battles of the Dark Ages* to a new collection of essays by the esteemed Civil War historian James McPherson—fall into the category of military history. Viewers tuning in to the History Channel on a recent weekend could choose from at least seven hours of military history programming, including an hour devoted solely to cannons. Popular taste, in other words, bears out the judgment of Edmund Burke, who quipped—long before the horrors of modern mechanized warfare—that the annals of good deeds would "not afford matter enough to fill ten pages. … War is the matter which fills all History."

Yet the discipline of history, as it exists in major U.S. universities, seems to have forgotten Burke's lesson. At Harvard this spring, for instance, only two of 85 history courses focus mainly on war. This is not surprising, because Harvard does not have a single specialist in military history among the 58 members of its history department. Neither does my own history department at Johns Hopkins; just two of our 61 spring courses are principally concerned with war. And so it goes across the country. The current issue of the *American Historical Review*, the flagship journal of the profession, includes reviews of no less than 194 new history books, only 15 of which, by my count, qualify as military history.

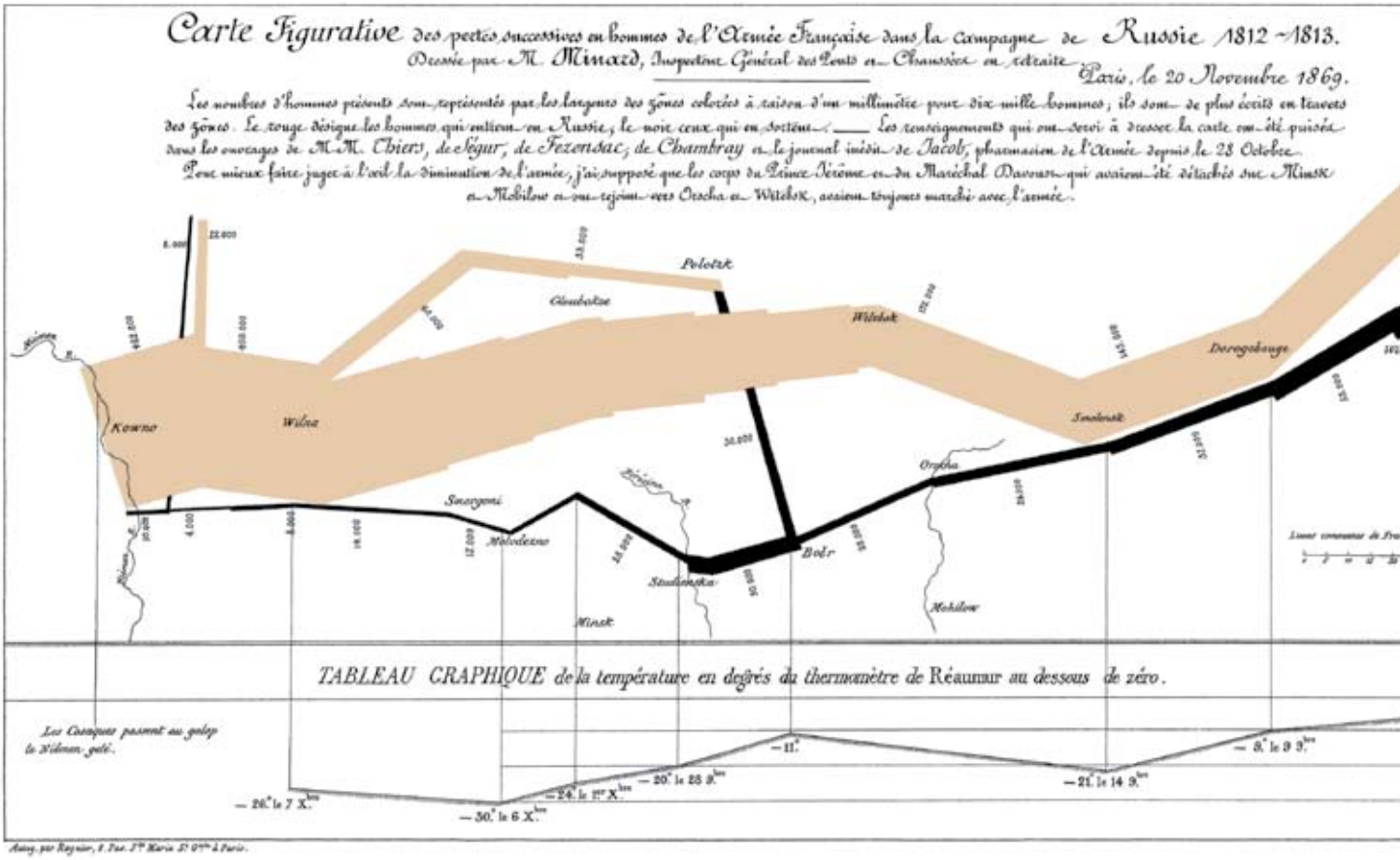
The subject does remain entrenched in some small corners of the university world—notably at the service academies and in publications like the *Journal of Military History*. At major research universities, a few specialists, such as Omer Bartov of Brown or Geoffrey Parker of Ohio State, have continued to do marvelous work integrating the study of armies and military operations with such topics as the Holocaust or the "world crisis" of the seventeenth century.

Yet most historians pay scant attention to military history, particularly the part that concerns actual military operations. And so, even in the midst of the Iraq war—the fifth major U.S. deployment since 1990—professors are teaching undergraduates surprisingly little about this historical subject of rather obvious relevance. To take just one example, the problem of how societies have historically evaluated their adversaries' intentions and capabilities remains understudied and rarely taught at a university level.

How can we explain the academy's odd neglect? One frequently mentioned reason is that few contemporary historians have any personal experience of the military. Today, a historian has to be in his mid-fifties (and male) ever to have faced the possibility of the draft, and most American historians come from the privileged strata of society that managed to avoid military service during Vietnam. But this answer doesn't really work. Historians routinely teach and write about a great many subjects absent from their own experience: slavery, plague, feudalism, industrial labor, human sacrifice. Why should war be different?

Another frequently given reason is that historians tend heavily toward pacifism, and this is probably true to some extent. For one thing, repeated surveys have shown that historians' political be-

Napoleon's march to Moscow—an artifact of that neglected discipline, military history.


Carte Figurative des pertes successives en hommes de l'Armée Française dans la Campagne de Russie 1812-1813.
Dressée par M. Minard, Inspecteur Général des Ponts et Chaussées en retraite.
Paris, le 20 Novembre 1869.
Les nombres d'hommes présents sont représentés par les largeurs des zônes colorées à raison d'un millimètre pour dix mille hommes; ils sont de plus écrits en travers des zônes. Le rouge désigne les hommes qui entrent en Russie, le noir ceux qui en sortent. — Les renseignements qui ont servi à dresser la carte ont été puisés dans les ouvrages de MM. Thiers, de Ségur, de Fezensac, de Chambray et le journal inédit de Jacob, pharmacien de l'Armée depuis le 28 Octobre.
Pour mieux faire juger à l'œil la diminution de l'armée, j'ai supposé que les corps du Prince Jérôme et du Maréchal Davoust qui avaient été détachés sur Minsk et Mobilow et qui rejoignirent vers Orscha et Witebsk, avaient toujours marché avec l'armée.
Kowno
Wilna
Smorgoni
Molodexno
Minsk
Studienska
Bobr
Mohilow
Orscha
Witebsk
Polotsk
Glubokoe
Dorogobouge
Smolensk
TABLEAU GRAPHIQUE de la température en degrés du thermomètre de Réaumur au dessous de zéro.
Les Cosaques passent au galop le Niémen gelé.
— 26° le 7 X.bre
— 30° le 6 X.bre
— 24° le 9 X.bre
— 20° le 25 9.bre
— 11°
— 21° le 14 9.bre
— 5° le 9 9.bre

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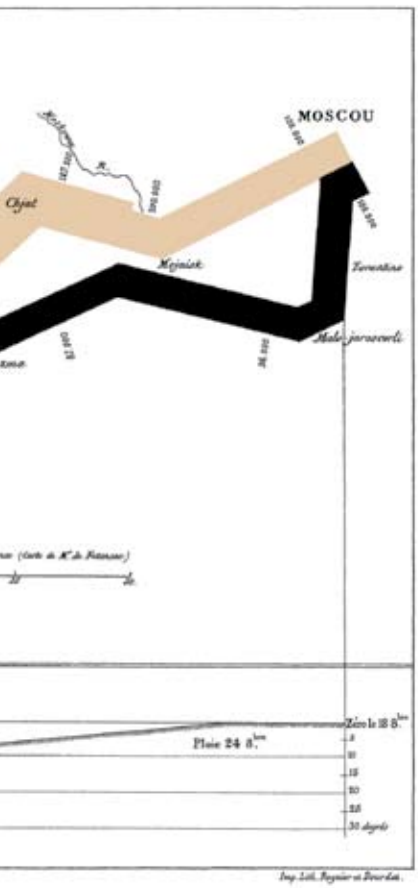
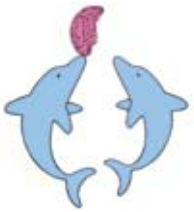
liefs skew considerably to the left of the general electorate's. And, just this winter, the membership of the American Historical Association passed, by a three-to-one margin, a resolution urging historians "to do whatever they can to bring the Iraq war to a speedy conclusion." But this explanation, too, is unsatisfactory, since historians routinely write and teach about many phenomena they detest.

A more important reason, I would argue, can be found in the development of the modern social sciences. As sociologists like Hans Joas and Michael Mann have observed, the origins of these sciences lie in liberal, Enlightenment-era thinking that dismissed war as primitive, irrational, and alien to modern civilization. Canonical thinkers of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, such as Montesquieu and Benjamin Constant, believed fervently that, as human societies grew more rational, and as commerce bound nations closer together, war would disappear. "We have reached the age of commerce, which must necessarily replace the age of war," Constant wrote in 1813.



TOMASZ WALENTA



Even Karl Marx did not fundamentally depart from these assumptions. He saw class conflict, not international conflict, as the motor of historical change, and he treated the latter as an artificial distraction. Nor did he ever exalt violence as cleansing and redemptive, the way some of his twentieth-century followers would do. In short, to most social scientists, conflict *between* societies simply has not been as worthy of theoretical interest as conflict *within* societies. True, one strain of nineteenth-century social scientists did take war more seriously, arguing that, without it, societies would weaken and wither. But they primarily lived in Germany, mostly grounded their thinking in starkly racialist views of human nature, and largely disappeared from the scene after World War I. There have been other significant exceptions—Carl Schmitt and Raymond Aron, to name just two—but the fact remains that the social sciences have mostly avoided giving war the attention it deserves.

Historians did not always fall into this pattern. In the nineteenth century, history was still predominantly a literary, narrative art, and the past offered no more dramatic or compelling subject than military conflict. Masters like Ranke, Macaulay, Michelet, and Parkman all took military science seriously and put climactic battles at the heart of their stories. In the twentieth century, however, history moved away from this tradition and toward the social sciences. The leaders of the influential "*Annales* school" of history, which developed in France in the early twentieth century, explicitly downplayed "event history"—by which they particularly meant military history—in favor of "deeper" geological, social, and economic factors. The most important *annaliste*, Fernand Braudel, held to this principle so strongly that he drafted much of his masterpiece, *The Mediterranean*, while in a World War II POW camp in Germany! Historians of the twentieth century resisted these tendencies better than others (not surprisingly, given the cataclysmic impact of the world wars). So did historians of Civil War–era America. But, in accounts of most other periods, war lost its formerly commanding position.

In a narrow sense, neglect of military history is easy enough to justify. Surely scholars should have the freedom to pursue those subjects they find most intellectually compelling, and I myself, as a paid-up member of the guild, would look askance at any outside authority trying to tell me what sorts of courses I should teach or what books I should write.

But then, in the real world, nonintellectual concerns constantly impinge upon what professors teach and write, while the question of the university's civic—as opposed to intellectual—obligations is not easily put aside. During the cold war, the government and private institutions like the Ford Foundation provided impressive funding for various sorts of "area studies," so as to increase American understanding of the regions in which we might find ourselves confronting the Soviets. It was not a question of forcing existing professors to teach or write on new subjects, but of encouraging movement into the desired areas. The years after September 11 have seen a welcome surge in the number of faculty positions and courses devoted to Islam and the Middle East, without producing any charges of a distorted intellectual agenda. Members of wealthy ethnic groups routinely endow professorships to spur research and teaching on their own particular history.

It seems to me that, at the very least, the study of military history could use more encouragement of this sort. With the United States facing a long-term terrorist threat—not to mention numerous rogue regimes, and the likelihood of having to send our Armed Forces to end genocide or protect vital interests in locations yet to be determined—our nation is almost certain to remain in the shadow of war for a long time to come. Given this fact, surely a broader, more rigorous intellectual knowledge of war itself is a matter of some civic interest.

Of course, promoting such historical knowledge does not mean subsidizing more books on subjects like cavalry tactics at the Battle of Antietam—which the public itself already subsidizes quite nicely. Nor does it mean—despite the knee-jerk fears of some of my colleagues—promoting politically conservative forms of history, as if only conservatives are driven to the study of war. It simply means studying and teaching about war in ways that historians find intellectually persuasive and important. But it also means asking historians to do something that scholars all too often shudder away from: putting some trust in the instincts of the general public. On this subject, at least, those instincts are quite correct.

DAVID A. BELL

David A. Bell is the author of The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare As We Know It.

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The Left's New Machine

How the netroots became the most important mass movement in U.S. politics.

JONATHAN CHAIT

Most political activists can point to one catalyzing event, an episode in each of their lives (or, more often, in the life of their country) that shook them from their complacency and roused them to change the world. You can find many such stories if you troll through the netroots, the online community of liberal bloggers that has quickly become a formidable constituency in Democratic politics. But the episode that seems to come up most often is the Florida recount. For instance, Markos Moulitsas Zúniga and Jerome Armstrong's book, *Crashing the Gate*, the closest thing to a manifesto of the netroots movement, begins like this:

> Five years ago, the Republicans took over the government through nondemocratic means. Establishment Democrats, for the most part, stood back and watched as a partisan judicial body halted the counting of presidential votes. While conservative activists led the charge on behalf of their party, there was nothing happening on our side. That was the spark. Fed-up progressive activists began organizing online. Fueled by the new technologies—the web, blogging tools, internet search engines—this new generation of activists challenged the moribund Democratic Party establishment.

The 2000 recount is an apt birthing ground for the netroots. It perfectly fits their view of U.S. politics as an atavistic clash of partisan willpower. And their analysis of that episode, while somewhat crude, has a certain truth. The liberal intelligentsia, and much of the Democratic establishment, tried to hold itself above the fray. During the recount, liberal pundits were concerned above all with maintaining civility and consensus, and they flayed Democrats for any hint of partisanship or anger. (In a *New Yorker* editorial, Joe Klein scolded that Al Gore "reinforced his partisan reputation by challenging the results in Florida" and cautioned that "vehemence of any sort—ideological, political, analytical—seems ill-advised.") Elite liberal opinion-makers insisted that their side play fair. Gore, they declared, must allow for the possibility that his opponent could win a fair recount, must renounce street demonstrations, must be intellectually consistent—permitting, say, military ballots that did not fulfill the letter of the law to be counted. Members of the Gore recount team like William Daley and Warren Christopher, seeking to uphold their reputations as statesmen, nervously complied.

The contrast with the Republican side could not have been more stark. The only complaint conservative pundits had with the George W. Bush operation was that it was too soft. (George Will wrote that there was a "ferocity gap"—but, in a classic case of projection, he insisted that Democrats were more ferocious.) Bush never conceded the possibility that he could lose. Nor did he feel any obligation to maintain intellectual consistency. His campaign demanded the letter of the law be carried out in those instances when it suited his side, and it flouted the letter of the law in those (military ballots, illegally submitted absentee ballots in Seminole County) when it did not. It whipped up a mob to halt a recount in Miami-Dade County that at the time appeared potentially decisive. Conservatives celebrated these developments without a hint of dissent. While Democrats in Washington constantly undermined the Gore campaign by telling reporters that Gore should concede, Washington Republicans maintained ranks. Through their greater resolve and partisan discipline, the Republicans triumphed.

All the lessons the netroots have gleaned about U.S. politics were on display in this noxious denouement, and those lessons have been reinforced time and again throughout the Bush presidency. The Democratic leadership and the liberal intelligentsia seemed pathetic and exhausted, wedded to musty ideals of bipartisanship and decorousness. Meanwhile, what the netroots saw in the Republican Party, they largely admired. They saw a genuine mass movement built up over several decades. They saw a powerful message machine. And they saw a political elite bound together with ironclad party discipline.

This, they decided, is what the Democratic Party needed. And, when they saw that the party leadership was incapable of creating it, they decided to do it themselves. "We are at the beginning of a comprehensive reformation of the Democratic Party," write Moulitsas and Armstrong. What they have accomplished in just a few years is astonishing. Already, the netroots are the most significant mass movement in U.S. politics since the rise of the Christian right more than two decades ago. And, by all appearances, they are far from finished with their task: recreating the Democratic Party in the image of the conservative machine they have set out to destroy.

The most significant fact of American political life over the last three decades is that there *is* a conservative movement and there has *not* been a liberal movement. Liberalism, to be sure, has all the component parts that conservatism has: think tanks, lobbying groups, grassroots activists, and public intellectuals. But those individual components, unlike their counterparts on the conservative side, do not see one another as formal allies and don't consciously act in concert. If you asked a Heritage Foundation fellow or an editorial writer for *The Wall Street Journal* how his work fits into the movement, he would immediately understand that you meant the conservative movement. If you asked the same question of a Brookings Institute fellow or a *New York Times* editorial writer, he would have no idea what you were talking about.

The netroots have begun to change all that. Its members are intensely aware of their connection to each other and their place in relation to the Democratic Party. The word "movement" itself—once rare among mainstream liberals—is a regular feature of their discourse. They call themselves "the people-powered movement," or "the progressive movement," or, often, simply "the movement."

Like any movement, the netroots is a pastiche of people and groups, with subfactions and varying levels of attachment. For that reason, there's almost no characterization that is true of

Harry Campbell

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every member. And yet, as movements go, the netroots are relatively coherent and centralized. If you were to trace the history of the netroots, Jerome Armstrong—sometimes called "The Blogfather"—is the place to begin.

In 2001, Armstrong began publishing a blog called *MyDD*, or "My Due Diligence," which made prognostications about political events and stocks, sometimes based on astrology. (As one astrological newsletter wrote, "Astrologer Jerome Armstrong notes that Ixion and Quaoar are following close in Pluto's wake in early Sagittarius, and connects the rise of the political version of religious fundamentalism with the astronomical exploration of the Kuiper Belt in 1992.") By 2002, *MyDD* allowed readers to post their own commentaries, and it began to take off as a locus of activism for Howard Dean supporters.

One frequent guest commenter on *MyDD* was Markos Moulitsas Zúniga, then a software programmer living in Berkeley, California. Moulitsas quickly developed a following and started his own liberal blog, called *Daily Kos*. In the years since then, *Daily Kos* has exploded in size, long since eclipsing *MyDD* (which has forgotten its financial/astrological origins and now stands for "My Direct Democracy"). *Daily Kos* now attracts more than half a million visits per day.

The next most influential netroots blog is probably *Eschaton*, written by Philadelphia economist Duncan Black under the pseudonym "Atrios." There are countless other blogs in the netroots orbit, including *Crooks and Liars*, *Americablog*, *FireDogLake*, and on and on.

Some of these sites have unique stylistic features (*Crooks and Liars* has lots of video clips, *FireDogLake* has on-the-scene reporting from such events as the Lieberman-Lamont race or the Scooter Libby trial) or a particular slant (*Americablog* tends to focus on gay rights issues). But, despite differences in ideology and style, these blogs share a basic orientation: liberal, partisan, and strongly critical of Bush and the Iraq war. Between them, and many smaller blogs, they have attracted what amounts to a mass following.

Outsiders often use the terms "netroots" and "liberal bloggers" interchangeably, but they aren't exactly the same thing. The netroots are a subset of the liberal blogs, constituting those blogs that are directly involved in political activism, often urging their readers to volunteer for, or donate money to, Democratic candidates. Other liberal bloggers, sometimes called the "wonkosphere," advocate liberal ideas but do not directly involve themselves in politics. Most of the popular sites in the wonkosphere are maintained by academics or (generally) young liberal journalists, such as former *American Prospect* staffer Joshua Micah Marshall of *Talking Points Memo* or *Washington Monthly* blogger Kevin Drum. The quality of these blogs varies immensely, with the best ones offering a level of reporting and analysis far better than typical mainstream media fare. While journalistic liberal bloggers are not directly part of the netroots, the two groups generally regard one another as allies and criticize one another tepidly if at all.

Two deep, organic bonds hold together the netroots. The first is generational. Netroots activists tend to be in their thirties, like Moulitsas and Black, or younger. Even those who are older, such as Armstrong (who is in his early forties), often developed a strong interest in politics only recently. Nearly all of them, then, share the common experience of having their political consciousness awakened and shaped by the Bush years.

Their newness makes them outsiders to the game. They are, by their way of thinking, self-made men and women who pulled themselves up from obscurity by dint of pure merit. They see the Washington establishment, by contrast, as a kind of clique, filled with mediocrities who attended the best schools or know the right people. The netroots shorthand for this phenomenon is "Washington cocktail parties"—where, it is believed, the elite share their wrongheaded ideas, inoculated from accountability. "They still have their columns and TV gigs," Moulitsas wrote on his blog last December, describing the Beltway elite. "They still get treated with reverence by the D.C. cocktail party circuit."

In point of fact, the most successful bloggers have been pulled into the warm embrace of the political establishment. Moulitsas consults regularly with influential Democrats in Washington. Presidential candidates hire popular bloggers or court them with private dinners. Last year, numerous top Democrats trekked to Las Vegas to attend YearlyKos, the liberal blog convention, where they sucked up to the attendees as relentlessly as if they were software executives. The climax of the proceedings was a party for bloggers thrown by then–presidential hopeful Mark Warner, costing more than $50,000 and featuring chocolate fountains. None of these things, however, have softened the netroots' sense of grievance and exclusion.

The second bond is a shared political narrative. This is not exactly the same thing as a shared ideology. The ideology of the netroots is, indeed, somewhat amorphous, as liberal bloggers themselves often point out. A major source of the ideological confusion is Moulitsas himself, who is almost comically lacking in philosophical depth. In one oft-discussed blog post, he described himself as a "libertarian Democrat" and proceeded immediately to outline a philosophy that was pure traditional liberalism. ("A Libertarian Dem believes that people should have the freedom to make a living without being unduly exploited by employers. … A Libertarian Dem gets that no one is truly free if they fear for their health, so social net programs are important to allow individuals to continue to live happily into their old age.")

Some liberal bloggers have tried to turn this ideological confusion into a strong point: Far from being ideologically hidebound, as their critics often contend, they are ruthlessly strategic political calculators. Moulitsas eagerly touts this line. "They want to make me into the latest Jesse Jackson, but I'm not ideological at all," he told *The Washington Monthly*. "I'm just all about winning."

It is true that the netroots embraces political calculation. But the strategies put forward by these activists almost invariably involve shifting the Democratic Party at least a bit to the left. Some of them are explicit about this. "Hiding from progressives and the left will lead to Democratic losses in 2006," wrote *MyDD*'s Matt Stoller last year. "Running as a progressive will lead to victory." One survey of netroots members found that two-thirds wanted the Democratic Party to move to the left.

So the netroots are clearly liberal, and more liberal than the Democratic Party as a whole. Ideology, however, is not the movement's defining trait. What unites them is a desire to replicate the successes of the conservative movement dating back to the 1960s.

When you turn to the '60s to find an antecedent for the netroots, the natural comparison would seem to be the New Left. The parallels are certainly there: Both movements were led by young people and political outsiders, driven by distrust of establishment liberalism and stoked by an unpopular war. But the netroots do not see themselves in the New Left mold. Rather, they see themselves in what was called, in its insurgent days, the

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New Right, and before that was known as the Goldwater movement.

The intellectual genesis of the netroots analysis lies in a book called *Before the Storm* by left-liberal historian (and TNR contributor) Rick Perlstein. He argues that the conventional narrative of the '60s pays far too much attention to left-wing activism. After all, he observes, the '60s ended with the left smashed by a rising conservative tide that has continued to this day. The real story is that of the grassroots countermobilization on the right, which took its most public form in the Barry Goldwater campaign. This movement built counterparts to the dominant liberal institutions, slowly took control of the Republican Party from the moderates who had been running it, and jerked the national agenda sharply to the right. Perlstein's book, wrote blogger and George Washington University political scientist Henry Farrell in a *Boston Review* essay, "enjoys near-canonical status among netroots bloggers."

Like the New Right (and unlike the New Left), the netroots is committed to working within the two-party structure. They have relatively little use for street demonstrations and none at all for Naderite third parties. They fervently support Democrats and, with increasing frequency, work for them directly.

Indeed, if there is a single thing that the netroots most admires about the right, it is its philosophical and political unity. There are, to be sure, numerous strands of thought on the right, each of which emphasizes different elements of the conservative canon. But there is far more holding together the conservatives than there is breaking them apart. This has been true dating back to the founding of *National Review*, with its emphasis on fusionism—the conservative creed uniting economic libertarians and social traditionalists. Religious conservative groups lobby for tax cuts, and economic conservatives support anti-abortion judges. One of the key figures uniting the conservative movement is Grover Norquist, a GOP activist/lobbyist who holds weekly meetings in which conservative activists and intellectuals hammer out a common agenda.

The netroots look upon this great right-wing apparatus with unconcealed envy. Traditionally, to the extent that movements exist on the left, they have been dispersed among single-issue organizations—environmentalists, labor unions, pro-choice activists—that mobilize only when their own pet issues are on the agenda. This piecemeal structure leaves each component group fighting solo battles against a large and cohesive coalition. Also, since there are political issues that do not directly affect the single-issue groups, it leaves swaths of liberal territory unguarded.

The netroots are scornful of single-issue liberal groups—or, really, any liberals at all who are not wholly dedicated to the cause of Democratic victory. As Stoller has written on *MyDD*, "To the extent that I have a political hero, it's probably Grover Norquist, not Ralph Nader." The netroots' dream is of a liberal army of grassroots activists, pundits, policy wonks, and politicians all marching more or less in lockstep.

This dream inevitably brings the netroots into conflict with many liberal political commentators, the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), and other outposts of the center left. The traditional interpretation of this feud is as a pure ideological spat between the left and right wings of the Democratic Party—and it's true that there's a strong ideological component to the spat. But the deeper divide is ethos, not ideology. The movement sensibility of the right, which the netroots are so determined to replicate, is largely foreign to the liberal and Democratic elite.

One of the defining features of the conservative movement is an intense social pressure upon its adherents not to break ranks. One episode from the 1990s demonstrates a fair sense of the prevailing ethos on the right. David Brock, until then a member of the conservative movement in good standing, set out to write a book about Hillary Clinton. Rather than producing the undiluted hit job he and his readers expected, Brock found himself painting a not entirely unsympathetic portrait of the first lady. The reaction among his colleagues was swift and brutal. The organs of the right—*The Wall Street Journal*'s editorial page, *National Review*, *The Washington Times*—denounced him for his heresy. A conservative friend of Brock's, the late Barbara Olson, disinvited him from a dinner party she and husband Ted Olson were throwing for fellow righties.

For conservatives, it was simply the expected outcome—a traitor getting his due. "People get bumped off invite lists every day," shrugged then–*Weekly Standard* writer Tucker Carlson. Such a blasé reaction might not say very much if Carlson were known for his movement reliability. But, in fact, just the opposite was true: Carlson himself was (and is) one of the most independent conservative pundits. Indeed, earlier that year, he himself had written an unflattering article about Norquist (perhaps motivated, in part, by a long-standing feud between Norquist and Carlson's father). When the *Standard*, in a display of movement loyalty, refused to publish it, Carlson sold it to The New Republic. Norquist subsequently confronted Carlson at a restaurant and called his article "not helpful to the movement." Other conservatives laid into him. "No one who believes what we believe should be attacking Grover," chastised Michael Ledeen of the American Enterprise Institute.

None of this is to suggest that lively debate cannot be found on the right. To the contrary: Conservatives have always argued fiercely amongst themselves. The difference is that conservatives are expected to toe the line in disputes between their side and the left. A conservative can criticize President Bush for being insufficiently conservative or suggest that running against Social Security is tactically unwise. What he cannot do is denounce the idea of impeaching a Democratic president for covering up a sexual affair in 1998 or question Katherine Harris's capacity to administer Florida election law fairly in 2000.

Most liberals find the movement ethos of the right incomprehensible. "This kind of treatment has no parallel among liberals," wrote *Slate*'s Jacob Weisberg in 1997. Among intellectuals and commentators on Weisberg's side, the prevailing norm is largely the opposite: to go out of one's way to demonstrate nonpartisan bona fides. Around the same time that Brock was getting shellacked for failing to toe the party line, Sidney Blumenthal was all but drummed out of liberal journalism for toeing it too closely, thanks to his chumminess with the Clintons. The worst thing that can happen to a conservative is to be seen as disloyal. The worst thing that can happen to a liberal is to be seen as "in the tank."

This ethos of political detachment among liberal intellectuals finds its natural counterpart in the strategies of the DLC. The DLC's basic idea is to embrace the political center—a model that is incompatible with movement politics. Movements require unanimity against external critics. The DLC model not only permits divisions among Democrats; in a sense, it relies upon them. The premise of the DLC's strategy is that the left wing of the party is unacceptable to the majority of voters. The answer is to explicitly disavow that left wing—to create a Third Way between the left and right poles.

Initially, at least, this seemed a successful strategy. Bill Clinton won the

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presidency in 1992 in part because he defined himself as "a different kind of Democrat"—one who favored capital punishment, welfare reform, and so on. But, over time, the DLC strategy led to a kind of ideological retrogression. Having reestablished the left pole of the national debate further to the center, the only way for Democrats to maintain their centrist image was to move further right still. By the late '90s, the DLC had abandoned its preference for universal health insurance for small piecemeal reforms and flirted with partial privatization of Social Security.

This veneration of centrism created an atmosphere in which Democratic unity was impossible. Democrats who unequivocally opposed the Bush administration's agenda were not, by definition, "centrists." And so, during the early Bush years, Democrats eager to preserve their standing as moderates often found themselves acquiescing to a conservative agenda that, not long before, would have been considered far outside the mainstream.

The netroots understand that this is not a fair fight. As Black (aka Atrios) has argued, you cannot sustain "a Democratic party in which all the leading Democrats are forever running against their own party. Triangulation can work for one man, but when every leading Democrat is constantly falling all over himself (yes, this is exaggeration) to get away from Those Damn Dirty Democrats, you have a party which is without foundation and where capitulation is confused with bipartisanship."

For the netroots, partisan fidelity is the sine qua non. As Moulitsas told *Newsweek* in 2005, "The issue is: Are you proud to be a Democrat? Are you partisan?" What they cannot forgive is Democrats or liberals who distance themselves from their party or who give ammunition to the enemy. The netroots will forgive Democrats in conservative districts for moving as far to the right as necessary to win elections. But they do everything within their power to eliminate from liberal states or districts moderates like Joe Lieberman or Jane Harman, whose stances are born of conviction rather than necessity. This is precisely the same principle espoused by Norquist and other GOP activists. They will defend Republicans who need to demonstrate their independence from the national party in order to maintain their electoral viability. (As Norquist once remarked about Lincoln Chafee, "A Republican from Rhode Island is a gift from the gods.") But deviation by a Republican from a conservative state—say, Arizonan John McCain—is unforgivable.

Another point of commonality between the netroots and the conservative movement is the belief that moderation is a kind of social malady brought about by residence within the Beltway. Conservatives believe that Republicans generally begin their national careers in a state of innocence but are perpetually susceptible to the blandishments of the liberal elite. The right has developed its own idioms—e.g., "strange new respect"—to describe the ways that they believe establishment bastions like *The New York Times* flatter and cajole conservatives into abandoning their principles.

The lure of this seduction is held to be so strong that it can only be prevented through regular doses of ideological inoculation. Part of the function of the conservative counter-establishment was to create separate social networks for the right that would counteract the effects of Georgetown cocktail parties. The old Washington social set rewarded Republicans for bipartisanship and punished them for hewing to their original beliefs. The new counter-establishment would do the opposite. Norquist has boasted about spurning traditional Washington social life for his alternative, movement-only dinner parties. "We didn't come to get invitations to their dinner parties or their receptions," he told *The Washington Post* a decade ago. "We don't need permission, seek approval, or hang out with the people who built the welfare state."

The netroots harbor a similar anti-Washington populism and, like the conservative movement, have set about creating alternative institutions and social networks. Some of them—such as Media Matters, which monitors conservative bias in the news, or the New Politics Institute, which promotes innovative approaches to organizing—are based in Washington. (Neither is a creation of the netroots, but both are closely allied and hire bloggers as fellows.) Others are virtual. The most important of these is an e-mail list called Townhouse. It includes "many bloggers and other representatives of the netroots as well as a large number of partisan journalists and grassroots groups," Moulitsas has written, and its purpose is to "have a unified message in the face of a unified conservative noise machine."

The party-line sensibility that pervades the netroots is not some artificial, Stalinist imposition. The close ties that exist among the netroots and its allies grow out of the technology they use so naturally. As insular as elite Washington may be, the netroots' world is arguably more so. The leading liberal bloggers all know one another and generally regard one another as friends, or at least allies. The countless smaller liberal bloggers may not inhabit the same social circles, but the nature of the form encourages them to share the same political sensibility. After all, if you are a new liberal blogger, your only way to escape total anonymity is if larger, established blogs point readers to your site. E-mail feedback and reader comments tend to be uniformly partisan as well, reinforcing the path of least resistance.

Even Matthew Yglesias, who writes one of the most independent-minded liberal blogs, confessed in March that he had soft-pedaled his opposition to gun control. "I don't write about this issue much because, hey, I don't want to be a wanker," he wrote. "Wanker" is the netroots equivalent of the conservative term "squish"—an expression of derision reserved usually, but not exclusively, for ideological defectors. It describes behavior that, for liberal journalists and policy wonks who came into politics a generation earlier, was a badge of honor.

In replicating the form and structure of the conservative movement, inevitably the netroots have replicated its intellectual style as well. The netroots, like the conservative movement, believe that they represent a natural political majority, one that can only be stymied by the timidity of their party's political establishment. *A Choice Not an Echo*, Phyllis Schlafly's 1964 pro-Goldwater tract, insisted "there is no way Republicans can lose *so long as we have a presidential candidate who campaigns on the issues.*" The logic of the netroots is eerily similar. "If we do our part to support the new generation of Democrats, the opposition doesn't stand a chance," writes Moulitsas. "Because all the money, all the name ID, all the connections don't stand a chance against a real people-powered movement."

Just as the Goldwaterites reserved their strongest contempt for the moderates who controlled the GOP, the netroots are at their most single-minded in their opposition to the moderates who they believe control the Democratic Party. The netroots often identify this enemy in amorphous, populist terms—"the Beltway," "the D.C. establishment," etc. When it comes to identifying its adversaries more specifically, the two institutions named most often are the DLC and TNR. Netroots activists speak of these two institutions in stark terms. "This is the modern DLC—an aider and abettor of Right-wing smear attacks against Democrats," wrote

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Moulitsas, who proceeded to threaten to "make the DLC radioactive." In a posting about TNR, titled "TNR's defection to the Right is now complete," Moulitsas wrote that this magazine "betrayed, once again, that it seeks to destroy the new people-powered movement for the sake of its Lieberman-worshipping neocon owners." Both the DLC and TNR are perpetually described as "dying" or "irrelevant," yet simultaneously possessed of sinister and ubiquitous control over the national discourse.

In reality, of course, the DLC is a political enterprise and TNR a journalistic one; each has on its staff individuals who do not always agree with each other; and neither institution exerts total control over every individual on its payroll. While both the DLC and TNR supported the Iraq war, both stridently opposed almost every other element of the Bush agenda. The overwhelming majority of DLC missives and TNR articles are perfectly congenial to mainstream liberalism and perfectly hostile to the Republican Party of George W. Bush. But these sorts of subtleties generally escape the Manichean analysis that pervades the netroots.

What makes such internal enemies so dangerous is that they engage in self-criticism. It is not that the netroots forbid internal debate. Far from it: They indulge in all sorts of disagreements, tactical and substantive, just as conservatives do. What they consider treasonous is any criticism of any part of the Democratic Party or its activist base from the right. You can attack the Democratic leadership in Congress for failing to force a troop withdrawal from Iraq, but you cannot attack it for opposing a troop surge.

For instance, Moulitsas wrote that Tom Vilsack, in his former capacity as chairman of the DLC, "not only signed off on editorial decrees by the DLC opposing [John] Murtha's and other withdrawal plans, but also gave safe haven for these warmongering 'Democrats' to divide the party." It is permissible to divide the party from the left, by opposing a moderate Democratic position. But if you divide the party from the right, you are an enemy of the movement.

Like any political community, the netroots have developed distinctive linguistic tics that hold special meaning to adherents, and these reveal something about the way the movement thinks. Among the most revealing is the netroots' incessant use of the words "meme" or "frame" to describe ideas. It is a formulation that assumes that establishing the truth about an idea matters less than phrasing the idea in the most politically effective way and repeating it as much as possible. As Ed Kilgore (a moderate liberal blogger with a complicated relationship to the netroots) has put it, this wording "reflects the strange belief that politics is all about 'noise' and 'narratives'; whoever makes the most noise or gets the most Google hits is going to win, regardless of objective reality."

This somewhat cynical outlook is not a habit the netroots have merely fallen into; it's a deliberate strategy. Political punditry, in their view, is not a form of intellectual discourse but of political battle. In an interview last year with ABC News, Moulitsas explained the ethos with remarkable clarity:

> I learned to talk the way I do in the U.S. Army. And we don't mince words. In politics, I don't see it any different. I see it as a battlefield. We didn't create this political environment; the Republicans did. The Rush Limbaugh[s] and Ann Coulter[s] created the world we live in, and, for too long, Democrats tried to keep the high ground: "Oh well, we're not going to go down in the muck with them."
>
> And the bottom line is that they've been winning and we've been losing, and it isn't because a couple of people use a potty word. It's because they were aggressive, they promoted their side very effectively, they riled up the troops, they motivated their supporters, they made sure their base was well-nourished.

When you're in a battle, you use any weapon available. One of the netroots' distinctive contributions to American political discourse is the extremely promiscuous use of the insult "chickenhawk." To be sure, people outside the military who favor a war ought to be conscious of the fact that they will not personally bear the risks of battle. In the hands of the netroots, however, it has become an all-purpose refutation. In response to one Thomas Friedman column, Black wrote, "'You' are not 'surging' so go back to your billionaire's pad and shut the fuck up. You've helped cause enough misery, none of which actually involved you." The insult can even be used to discredit critics on subjects unrelated to warfare. When *National Review* reporter Byron York wrote an unflattering account of YearlyKos last year, Moulitsas sneered, "Byron is just another chickenshit who didn't serve his nation in uniform."

As a matter of logic, these insults are preposterous. Taken at face value, they suggest that it's illegitimate to support a war if you're not fighting in it. But nearly all liberal bloggers claim to support at least some wars—say, the fight in Afghanistan—and very few of them have ever served in the Armed Forces. (Moulitsas is a notable exception, having served in the Army.) So, by their own standards, most liberal bloggers are chickenhawks, too. In the netroots, though, the measure of an idea is its rhetorical effectiveness, not its truth.

The notion that political punditry ought to, or even can, be constrained by intellectual honesty is deeply alien to the netroots. They have absorbed essentially the same critique of the intelligentsia that the right has been making for decades. In the conservative imagination, journalists, academics, and technocrats are liberal ideologues masquerading as dispassionate professionals. Those who claim to be detached from the political struggle are unaware of their biases, or hiding them.

Norquist once said something to me that gave perfect expression to this view. During the 2000 campaign, the two of us were making small talk before we were set to debate, and he offered that the event would be clarifying for his team as well as for my team. I replied that, while I certainly have strong opinions, I wasn't working for any "team." Norquist smiled at me in a slightly condescending way and said, "Sometimes, we're on a team and we don't realize it."

This is more or less the same view of the netroots. They attack liberals who, in their fervor to be seen as fair-minded, bend over backward so far that they do violence to truth. And they are quite right to do so. But the netroots critique is not that the liberal intelligentsia has stretched the conception of fairness too far; it is that the conception of fairness itself is folly. Any sense of detachment from the partisan fray is impossible. Earlier this year, Black made the point quite lucidly:

> Lots of people imagine themselves to be, somehow, above the fray. The most obvious group which does this is journalists and their brethren. They fail to see themselves as actors on the political stage, instead of detached observers. … I've also seen it in academics, who for all their supposed liberalness, to a great degree really see themselves outside of this grand messy business called politics. It's dirty, somehow.
>
> You see it in technocrats, who too often devise their magical pony plans without considering the need to under-

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stand the broader context. From what people say, you see it in a lot of liberal donors/institutions, who somehow like to see what they do as operating outside of politics.

This ethos helps explain the enormous distrust between the netroots and the traditional liberal intelligentsia. (Or, as Black put it, the "incredible gap between those who see the debate as a kind of game and those who, you know, actually give a shit about stuff.") Part of it is the slight whiff of anti-intellectualism in some quarters of the netroots. (Moulitsas, echoing Black's thoughts, suggested that "'intellectuals' who'd rather read books and measure purity are next-to-useless. I prefer people of action, not of [sic] elitist academics.") The prevailing sentiment here, however, is not a distrust of pointy heads. Rather, it's a belief that political discourse ought to be judged solely by its real-world effects. The netroots consider the notion of pursuing truth for its own sake nonsensical. Their interest in ideas, and facts, is purely instrumental.

Because they convey facts and opinions about the news to their readers, bloggers associated with the netroots are often mistaken for journalists. That is, as reporter Garance Franke-Ruta (who covers the blogs) has put it, a "category error." This was thrown into stark relief earlier this year, when John Edwards hired Amanda Marcotte and Melissa McEwan, two bloggers who were prominent in the netroots. The pair quickly came under enough fire for past controversial blog posts—Marcotte, for example, had speculated, "What if Mary had taken Plan B after the Lord filled her with his hot, white, sticky Holy Spirit?"—that the Edwards campaign decided to cut them loose. Before it announced the decision, however, Marcotte and McEwan's allies lobbied heavily on their behalf. The liberal online magazine *Salon* reported the firings, but the Edwards camp hunkered down and refused to release a public statement while it decided on a course of action, then denied the firings to *Salon* the following day. Liberal bloggers in close contact with the campaign remained resolutely cryptic about what they knew. "The bloggers closed ranks around the Edwards campaign, some even claiming that *Salon* had gotten the story wrong," *Salon*'s Joan Walsh later reported. To Walsh and other journalists, the relevant metric is true versus untrue. To an activist, the relevant metric is politically helpful versus politically unhelpful.

There is a term for this sort of political discourse: propaganda. The word has a bad odor, but it is not necessarily a bad thing. Propaganda is often true, and it can be deployed on behalf of a worthy cause (say, the fight against Nazism in World War II). Still, propaganda should not be confused with intellectual inquiry. Propagandists do not follow their logic wherever it may lead them; they are not interested in originality. Propaganda is an attempt to marshal arguments in order to create a specific real-world result—to win a political war.

The netroots have already changed U.S. politics in sundry ways. They have pressured the Democratic Party to adopt more innovative tactics rather than rely on the cookie-cutter advice of high-priced consultants. And they have pressed the party to adopt a more adversarial tone. Earlier this year, for instance, liberal bloggers successfully lobbied Democratic candidates to boycott a debate forum sponsored by Fox News, on the grounds that their participation would legitimize Fox's dubious claim to be a balanced news organization.

They have raised significant sums of cash for politicians, organized volunteers, and brought together like-minded activists. This has, in turn, created an alternative power center for recruiting candidates for office. Before the netroots, potential candidates who wanted the national party to take them seriously needed to raise large sums from familiar donors. Now they can raise money on the Internet and approach the national party from a position of strength. "They have totally changed the equation for what makes it possible for somebody to be a viable candidate," notes Mark Schmitt of the New America Foundation.

But the most important role played by the netroots is to purvey liberal and pro-Democratic propaganda to offset that coming from the right. As Moulitsas has noted, "We're better as a message machine."

It has taken an abnormally long time for this message machine to come into existence. In the decades after World War II, the news media evolved a strong professional standard of nonpartisanship. Network news broadcasts faced little financial pressure, and newspapers—fattened up by advertising monopolies—followed the dictates of their professional values rather than the demands of the market. They maintained costly bureaus in Washington and abroad, and their ideology was mostly high-minded establishment centrism.

The first outlets to break away from this news oligarchy all sprang up on the right—talk radio, Fox News, the *Drudge Report*. Such partisan outlets did a brilliant job of injecting pro-Republican stories and ideas into the mainstream public

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discourse, using classic propaganda techniques, endlessly repeating ideas, phrases, and images that helped their side with little regard for truth or intellectual consistency. During the '90s and the outset of the Bush years, this was the landscape: a large mainstream media, with a social liberal bias mostly buried beneath studious nonpartisanship, and a wildly partisan conservative media. All the pressure on the mainstream media came from the right. Even liberal opinion journalists, in this unbalanced world, felt obliged to demonstrate their nonpartisanship.

Liberals made several attempts to recreate the conservative message machine—Jim Hightower, Mario Cuomo, and countless others attempted and failed to create talk-radio programs. Most people concluded from these failures that liberals simply didn't want partisan vitriol of the sort offered up by Rush Limbaugh and Fox News. They wanted high-minded discussions of the sort found on National Public Radio. Nonconservatives, wrote *The New Yorker*'s Hendrik Hertzberg in 2003, "wouldn't think it was fun to listen to expressions of raw contempt for conservatives."

This analysis, shared by nearly all observers just a few years ago, turns out to be completely wrong. Maybe an audience for raw partisan liberal attacks existed all along but was ill-served by piecemeal forays into talk radio. Or maybe the audience was born suddenly by the shock of the Bush years. In any case, it is obvious that a sizeable liberal audience was not being served the red meat it craved. "People were hungry for strong, unapologetic liberals, and those were completely absent from the media landscape," Moulitsas writes. "I mean, who did progressive [sic] have supposedly representing their side? Joe Frickin' Klein. Is it any wonder blogs grew in response?"

The creation of a liberal message machine has not only filled a vacuum in the political discourse. It has also had an impact on the mainstream media itself. One revealing window into how this has worked, as it happens, is Joe Frickin' Klein himself.

In early January, *Time* unveiled a new blog, *Swampland*, featuring several of its political writers, including Klein, a columnist for the magazine. While this was almost certainly not its intended effect, *Swampland* turned out to be a fascinating experiment about the effects of bringing mainstream journalists into close contact with the Internet left.

Klein's initial forays were classic Klein: His second post was a blast at "ill-informed dilettantes" of the left who prove that "[l]iberals won't ever be trusted on national security until they start doing their homework." Predictably, the netroots lashed into him. Just as predictably, his immediate reaction was to lash back, in a follow-up blog post attacking "illiberal leftists and reactionary progressives" and suggesting that his critics did not want the administration's strategy in Baghdad to succeed.

The next couple of weeks, however, saw none of the sorts of criticism of liberals that marked Klein's first post and much of his career. When, a few weeks later, he ventured back onto controversial terrain, he did so in an apologetic tone, almost as if he were cringing in anticipation of the blows that were sure to follow. "I know it's become common practice to slag David Broder in the blogosphere," he wrote. "But let me say this in David's defense . . . ."

Klein still regularly took issue with his liberal critics, but the frequency of his dissents declined markedly, and the esteem with which he treated his tormentors rose commensurately. He continued to endure constant criticism and would often post three or four updates to his blog items, each replying to a wave of attacks. Moreover, Klein began with increasing frequency to concede the truth of the criticisms against him—e.g., "I was (correctly) hammered last year when I said on Stephanopoulos that 'all options—including nukes—should be on the table' in our dealings with Iran." And his liberal opinions seemed to grow more frequent and less hedged. ("I'm dedicating the rest of my life to making sure that we never go to war so foolishly again—if at all.")

Liberal bloggers regarded the newly tamed Klein with unconcealed satisfaction. In a post on how the netroots was successfully lobbying the mainstream media, Yglesias wrote, "I might also note that Swampland is suddenly full of posts I find much more agreeable than the ones they were doing early on." His fellow blogger Ezra Klein (no relation), of the *Prospect*, offered a persuasive explanation of his namesake's more liberal-friendly tone:

> It's worth remembering that, for years, the only thing these quasi-liberal columnists heard was how biased, out-of-touch, and incomprehensibly progressive they were. So they began tailoring, consciously or not, their work to defend against those criticisms.

Klein, like many journalists, had spent his career in a world where there was only one real movement in U.S. politics. He had become accustomed to sustained ideological mau-mauing, but he had expected it only from one side, and, over the years, this imbalance had taken its toll. Now, suddenly, there are two such movements, balanced on either side of the moderate mainstream.

Whether or not liberals ought to consider this a good thing depends on how wide their frame of reference is. At the narrow level, the netroots take part in a great deal of demagoguery, name-calling, and dishonesty. Seen through a wider lens, however, they bring into closer balance the ideological vectors of propaganda in our public life.

Take the case of Cindy Sheehan, the mother of a slain soldier who camped out at Crawford, Texas, in August 2005, demanding to meet with President Bush. The press corps did not treat her as a serious story, and understandably so—there were many parents of fallen soldiers with strong views on Iraq, so why should hers hold such weight? But the netroots took hold of the Sheehan story, harping on it for days, and forced it onto the national agenda. This is the sort of thing conservatives have been doing for years. The Swift Boat Veterans For Truth deserved no special credibility, either, but, in 2004, the right-wing media apparatus elevated them onto the national stage. Was the veneration of Sheehan intellectually shabby? Without a doubt. Was it, considered as a whole, a bad thing? That is not so clear.

The Democratic Party, as Moulitsas has written, is indeed undergoing a comprehensive reformation, as is liberalism in general. At the end of this reformation, what will the left look like? It will look a lot more like the Republican machine that prevailed in Florida. It will be nastier and more ruthless, and less concerned with intellectual or procedural niceties. It will be more of a disciplined movement and less of a collection of idiosyncratic personalities.

Conservatives have crowed for years that they have "won the war of ideas." More often than not, such boasts include a citation of Richard Weaver's famous dictum, "Ideas have consequences." A war of ideas, though, is not an intellectual process; it is a political process. As my colleague Leon Wieseltier has written, "[I]f you are chiefly interested in the consequences, then you are not chiefly interested in the ideas." The netroots, like most of the conservative movement, is interested in the consequences, not the ideas. The battle is being joined at last. ◆

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A Guided Tour of Hell

My journey through Darfur.

BERNARD-HENRI LÉVY PHOTOGRAPHS by ALEXIS DUCLOS

My ride is a windowless Toyota pickup without plates. It is nightfall in Bahay, the last town on the Chad border before Darfur. So as not to embarrass the humanitarian workers who are putting me up, the pickup stops 100 yards away, in front of the dusty shack that serves as the police station. The driver, Otman, is very young. Four armed men are sitting in the back, perched on bundles of bread, their long, colorless turbans wrapped around their heads. There is a fifth man, their commander—who speaks a few words of English. In the dark, he abruptly hands me his Thuraya satellite phone. At the other end of the line is Abdul Wahid Al Nour, the leader of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), with whom I have been in contact from Paris. His is one of the two rebel armies that rejected the Abuja peace accords in May 2006.

"Sorry for the delay," he says, his voice barely audible over the incessant din of the sandstorm that has been raging since morning. "Our telephones are tapped, so yesterday the corridor we were planning to use for you was cut off by a column of four thousand Janjaweed. We had to find another way, you understand?"

Yes, I do. But the terrible mounted militia of the Islamic regime in Khartoum *here*? I had been told back in N'Djamena that the area just north of the border had been won by the guerrillas.

Before we can get underway, there is a short stop next to a thatched hut where fuel cans are stacked. Some children load them silently into the back of the truck. Then, a little farther on, still on the Chad side of the border, another stop to pick up some blankets at a small hut that, like the road itself, is all but hidden by the sand.

And we're off into Sudan, into the province of Darfur, barreling along at top speed, usually with our headlights off, through the desert of rocks, brambles, frost-hardened sand, and dead trees that Otman avoids each time by swerving at the last second. It's cold. It's bumpy. The photographer, Alexis Duclos, and I take turns sitting in front next to the driver, where at least we

Hadja Abdelaziz walking in front of her house in Khortial, where more than 50 people have been killed, including three of her children.

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can see the jolts coming. The men in the back smoke or doze, holding their Kalashnikovs between their knees. From time to time and for no apparent reason, one of them freezes, looking around warily. Another shoots at an antelope and is yelled at for wasting a bullet. Soon, after the sandstorm has died down and the moon comes out, we can see for the first time the ruins of burned villages that the desert has begun to reclaim. Mere black circles of soot. Piles of branches and thorns tossed onto the mass graves, like so many humble mausoleums.

Tonight, these will be the only traces of humanity we see in this desolate land, as if here, in the northern part of Darfur, the ethnic purification that is the principal issue in this conflict—pitting the "Arab" horsemen against the "black" tribes of Zaghawa, Tunjur, and Fur—is in fact on the way to succeeding.

There was a time when wars took place on front lines with clearly identified enemies and territory to take or defend in pitched battles and skirmishes. Then came the wars where guerrillas would hold the countryside while government troops concentrated on the big cities and major roads. As far as I can tell, there are no cities and no roads, large or small, in Darfur. There are not even checkpoints, those minimal markers of space that at least tell you where you are. There is only the desert. And phantom armies skirting and brushing against one another. Beginning with our unit, which stops every half-hour or so. Otman turns on his Thuraya, extending its little antenna and finding the satellite like a diviner finding a well, and has cryptic conversations with his invisible scouts. Depending on what he hears, whether the Janjaweed are present or not, whether or not, in the Jebel Moon zone, there are fighters from the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)—the rival guerrilla movement—he will drive on, double straight back or diagonally, or, on two occasions, just stop. The men immediately get out, laying their mats down on the ground and rolling up in blankets to sleep, and wait for another call telling them the danger has passed.

We drive for 14 hours, covering approximately 400 kilometers. Around noon the next day, we arrive in Um Rai, where we are welcomed by a small, elegant man who wears a blue parka over a pair of army pants and is surrounded by sages in white robes. Mustafa Adam Ahmadai is the area's political boss. He goes by "Rocco," his code name from before the war when he was a high-ranking officer in the Sudanese intelligence services.

Um Rai is a liberated area where the survivors of the massacres in the neighboring villages have gathered. The scenario is always the same and echoes the stories told to me—as well as to François Zimeray and the French delegation of *Urgence-Darfour*—when we talked with the refugees in the Goz Beida camps in Chad a few days ago. The Janjaweed usually come at dawn, hurling flaming torches into the huts. They smash the tall clay jars with their clubs, spilling millet and sorghum onto the ground and then setting fire to it. They scream ferociously as they ride around the flames. They rip babies from their mothers' arms and toss them into the bonfires. They rape the women, beat them, disembowel them. They round up the men and execute them with machine guns. When finally everything has burned, when all that is left of the village is crumbling, smoking ruins, they round up the terrified animals and drive them toward Sudan.

My witnesses have names. There is Hadja Abdelaziz, 30, with six children, three of whom perished during the attack on the village of Khortial. And Fatmah Moussa Nour, 28, who lost her husband in the bombing of Birmaza last October. But stories like these can be heard in the camps on the other side of the border. What can't always be gleaned from that distance is the fact that these infernal columns, which Khartoum describes as uncontrollable hordes of bandits, are always under the supervision of officers of the regular Sudanese army. There were Sudanese in Tawila, Rocco tells me, in February of 2004, when 67 were killed, 93 women raped, and more than 5,000 people displaced. There were also Sudanese in Hashaba, which is a little higher up, but there were no deaths because a battallion of the SLA was able to evacuate the civilians. "And, as for Disa—let's go there, to Disa. You will see with your own eyes."

Fifteen kilometers to the east, Disa is another village recently razed to the ground. We go there in three trucks. A survivor, whose eyes are dilated in fear, wanders among the charred ruins of his house and tells us how the Janjaweed came twice. Once to destroy the millet granaries, burn the huts and mosque, and kill. They came back the second time to demolish the school. "Both times," he says, "it was a captain from Khartoum directing the operation. Let the investigators from the international court come here if they want—we'll give them the evidence!" So, could it be that the Janjaweed, the much-discussed "horsemen of the Apocalypse," are perhaps just a convenient bogeyman? And could it be that the Janjaweed are really a proxy for the fundamentalist, Islamist, racist Sudan?

A Sudanese Liberation Army fighter in the village of Khortial.

Take a closer look at these horsemen, and you find that they are rather more "mechanized" than you would expect. When they came back to Disa the second time for the school, they were not on horses or camels, but brought a cannon mounted on a troop-carrier to shell the classrooms. Or in Kur-Syal, eight kilometers farther west, there is a huge crater that was made by a bomb dropped from an Antonov airplane last January 23 in utter disregard for the international no-fly rule. Hardly the work of Janjaweed riding camels. Or in Disa under the *palaver* tree, where children are playing inside the shell of an olive green truck that an elite company of the SLA took by force halfway to Jebel Marra. "Look at this truck," says Rocco. "Make sure you get a photo of the make, Giad, and of the Sudanese license plate. This truck came right off the assembly line that President [Omar] Al Bashir inaugurated near Khartoum seven years ago with, among others, you, the French."

Here, the long but rudimentary war of low intensity led by obscure tribes hashing out ageless quarrels is also a myth. I personally witness the paraphernalia, the big guns, the smell of a hot war, and the large-scale crimes against humanity. It's all here.

Rocco is standing under a canopy in Birmaza, 60 kilometers north of Um Rai. He introduces his commanding officers to me one at a time. I meet Mohammed Abdorahman, who is called "the Tiger" because of his bravery and, I am told, his cat-like speed at establishing contact between the fronts. Nimeiry, the intellectual, wears a beige turban rolled tightly at the forehead in the Afghan style. There is the jovial Mohammed Adam Abdulsalam, also known as General Tarada, meaning "General Two Cents" or "Low Wage" because he was apparently hopeless in business as a civilian, whereas he has become something of a strategic genius in war. After last summer's massacres in the Korma area, where around 100 villagers were killed, Tarada took back Hillat Hashab and Dalil with only 30 men. And, just a few weeks ago in the same zone, he captured four vehicles from a column of SLA/MM fighters, the rival army of Minni Minnawi, which accepted the Abuja peace talks and is linked to Khartoum. And he also conceived the attack on Sudanese forces in El Fasher, the capital of North Darfur, in

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(Clockwise from top left) A group of SLA fighters in their vehicle; a burnt identity card on the ground in the village of Loubou-tiké; SLA fighters mix with locals in the village of Beredik.

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April 2003, which became the pretext for the government to unleash its total war. "Don't be fooled by his teddy-bear looks," says Rocco with a smile. "What I am telling you has been documented. He is our best commanding officer. Al Bashir would give all his gold for that man's head—or to get him to work for the other side."

We are still in the Birmaza area, in the middle of a circle of stones in which Rocco and Tarada's men are training under an oppressive sun. There are 100 men, some bearded and some clean-shaven, small farmers who have come down from the villages and are being taught to salute, present arms, march. I am struck by how young they are (although I do not, thankfully, see any child soldiers) and by their awkwardness and slightly delayed reactions, like in a poorly timed operetta, when the sergeant shouts, "At ease!" or "Ready! Aim!" I see in them a mix of extreme seriousness (each one I interview will tell me he is here because he has lost a loved one) and spirited good humor (their way of swaggering and elbowing one another when they pose for photographs).

But, up close, it becomes apparent that there is a destitute aspect to this barefoot troop with their vacant looks and swollen lips cracked from thirst. I count only two mortars and three rocket-propelled grenade launchers for this entire company of 100 men. Some Kalashnikovs, but not enough for everyone. For uniforms, they have a motley collection of parkas and burnooses, jeans and sweatpants, and, occasionally, in the best of cases, a tattered camouflage jacket that I think I recognize as part of the Chad army uniform.

"We have nothing," says the heavyset General Tarada, as though reading my mind. "No one helps us, so we have nothing. Chad? No; President [Idriss] Déby is too afraid of the retaliation the Sudanese would inflict via the infiltrated rebel groups, so he's very careful. The truth is that all the weapons you see here were taken from the enemy. All of them. And, as for our vehicles. …" He points, with a strangely stately gesture, toward two Toyotas that have just pulled up so that the officers can use the cigarette lighters to recharge their Thurayas—along with a third from which gas is being siphoned for the truck that is going back to Chad. "As for our vehicles—you understand, yes? They are all spoils of war."

Then he lowers his voice, as if he is going to tell me an important military secret: "We have so little gas that, when we go into battle, the men have to physically push the armored cars up to where they can engage the enemy." He lowers his voice even more, hesitating, as if he isn't sure he should be telling me this: "And look at this. …" He signals to two of his fighters to come over. They are extremely impressive with their wide, heavy cartridge belts wound around their waists and shoulders—until I see that easily half the loops on their belts are empty, holding gris-gris or rolled-up verses of the Koran instead of bullets.

I am reminded of the Bosnians during the siege of Sarajevo and the military embargo that was imposed alike on the over-equipped aggressors and their nearly unarmed victims. I know the situations are not really comparable, and I know full well that these armed peasants—roused by an inexpiable fury and screaming in unison, "Long life to Tarada!", this general who, when I ask him how he treats his prisoners, mutters that he really doesn't take all that many—are themselves not shining examples of virtue. But a part of me does make the connection. A part of me cannot hold back outrage at the flagrant inequity of these pathetic weapons going up against the bomb crater of Kur-Syal, the barrels filled with gasoline and nails dropped from low-flying Antonovs, the villages reduced to ashes, the boneyards.

I cannot help but ask: If we are incapable of stopping the massacres, if we have neither the will nor the power to punish Sudan's terrorist regime, if we do not even dare to pressure China, its ally in the Security Council, into accepting the introduction of U.N. peacekeepers, should we not at least be helping those who are defending these people with their own lives?

Here's how I look at it: The villages of Disa and Birmaza, which live under the protection of the SLA; the market in Beredik where we buy provisions for our return trip and which, with its onions, tomatoes, and biscuits laid out on brightly colored mats, is almost jaunty; the tiny bazaar in Muzbad where I find soaps made in Libya; the camel market in Anka, where I am assured that the Arab nomads still stop to pay their passage and housing fees, the way they did in the good old days; or even—this is only a detail, but it says a lot—the fact that Rocco actually pays for what he gets in Beredik as opposed to just taking it like other guerrillas do. The liberated area of Um Rai is still, of course, a war zone. (And some rebel groups are better armed than others.) I have met no one there who does not give off the terror, the overwhelming fear, that reveals the imminence of death in war. But the presence of the SLA actually seems to be a calming, steadying influence. For someone arriving from Chad, someone remembering the terrible plight of the refugee camps, the displaced persons in Goz Beida or in Djabal—for me, who has seen the humanitarian workers labor so hard to feed and take care of these people whose meager treasures will surely be looted or trashed in the next Janjaweed attack—the least that can be said is that, yes, the question should be asked: Would it not be better to keep these people where they are and, if need be, arm those who resist with them?

On the road back to Chad, I will have a last conversation, this one political in nature, with Commander Nimeiry. It will confirm this feeling. It is five in the morning. We have again been driving for most of the night. Suddenly, 50 kilometers before we hit the border, Otman sees some suspicious lights. He skids to a stop, whipping the truck around 180 degrees, and takes off in the opposite direction until he finally stops in the dry bed of a wadi. After the men get out and unroll their mats as usual and go to sleep, I ask Nimeiry, "So what, in the best of worlds, would be your solution for Darfur?" He replies, "In any case, it would not be secession. We do not want independence, but we do need a formula for equality within a federal Sudan." I ask what kind of government he would want. "Our program is very clear. It is democratic, secular; it is based on the principle of citizenship; and it is opposed to Sudanese fundamentalism, which goes against the spirit of Africa."

A program is only a program, of course. But, as I listen to him, I realize that I have seen very few mosques in devastated Darfur; I realize I have not seen any women wearing the veil. I think back to that bombed-out school in Disa where the girls' classrooms were right next to the boys'.

It occurs to me that I am looking at a particularity of this war and another incentive for mobilization: Perhaps this is about radical Islam versus moderate Islam. This is the regime that, in the late '90s, chose to give asylum to Osama bin Laden over a Muslim population resisting Islamism. In the heart of Africa, in the darkness of what will soon—if we do nothing—be the first genocide of the twenty-first century, is another theater of the true clash of civilizations, which is, as we know, that of the two Islams. ◆

Bernard-Henri Lévy, French writer and philosopher, is the author, most recently, of American Vertigo: Traveling America in the Footsteps of Tocqueville. *This article was translated by Sara Sugihara from the French.*

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The Forgotten Refugees

Why does nobody care about the Jewish refugees from Arab lands?

The world is greatly concerned about the Arabs who fled the nascent state of Israel in 1948. But no mention is ever made of the Jewish refugees from Arab lands. Their history is as compelling and arguably more so than that of the Arab refugees from Israel.

What are the facts?

Jews in Arab countries. Jews have lived since Biblical times in what are now Arab countries. After the Roman conquest, Jews were dispersed, mostly to what are now the Arab countries of North Africa and the Middle East. Many Jews migrated to the Iberian peninsula – Spain and Portugal. They were expelled from those countries at the end of the 15th century. They mostly migrated to the Arab countries, where, by now, they have been living for almost 500 years, many Jews for over 2,000 years.

There is a myth that Jews had an easy life in Muslim/Arab countries. The opposite is the case. Jews under Islam were treated as second-class citizens and worse. The relationship was governed by a system of discrimination, intended to reduce the Jews in those Arab countries to conditions of humiliation, segregation and violence. They were excluded from society, from government, and from most professions. They were barely tolerated and often, under the slightest pretext or no pretext at all, were victimized by vicious violence.

When Israel declared its statehood in 1948, pogroms broke out across the entire Arab/Muslim world. Thousands died in this violence. Their homes and businesses were destroyed, their women violated. The vast majority of those Jews fled from where they had lived for centuries. They had to leave everything behind. Most of those who were able to escape found their way to the just-created state of Israel.

Over 850,000 Jews were driven from Arab countries, most of them in 1948, at the birth of Israel. Most of the remainder were chased out during or immediately following the Six-Day War in 1967, when, in fury about the disastrous defeat, the "Arab street" erupted and subjected its Jewish population to bloody pogroms. Israel received every one of those Jewish refugees from Arab countries with brotherly open arms; it housed, fed, and quickly integrated them into Israeli society. They and their descendants now make up more than one-half of the country's population.

Jews in Arab Countries

	1948	Now
Algeria	140,000	0
Egypt	75,000	100
Iraq	135,000	100
Lebanon	5,000	100
Libya	38,000	0
Morocco	265,000	5,700
Syria	30,000	100
Tunisia	105,000	1,500
Yemen	55,000	200

A different history. It is instructive to compare the history of those Jewish refugees with that of the Arabs who fled from Israel during its War of Independence. There were about 650,000 of them. Most left following the strident invocations of their leaders, who urged them to leave, so as to make room for the invading Arab armies. After victory was to be achieved, they could return to reclaim their property and that of the Jews, all of whom would have been killed or would have fled.

In contrast to the Jewish refugees, who were quickly integrated into Israel, the Arab countries resolutely refused to accept the Arab refugees into their societies. They confined them into so-called refugee camps. Those camps are essentially extended slum cities, where their descendants – now the fourth generation – have been living ever since. The reason for the Arabs' refusal to accept them was and still is the desire to keep them as a festering sore and to make solution of the Arab/Israel conflict impossible. These "refugees," whose number has by now miraculously increased from their original 650,000 to 5 million, are seething with hatred toward Israel and provide the cadres of terrorists and suicide bombers.

The Palestinian refugees occupy a unique place in the concern of the world. Since 1947, there have been over 100 UN resolutions concerning the Palestinian refugees. But there has not been one single resolution addressing the horrible injustices done to the nearly one million Jewish refugees from the Arab states.

There have been many millions of refugees in the wake of the Second World War. With only one exception, none of those refugee groups occupy the interest of the world and of the United Nations in a major way. That one exception are the Palestinian refugees. In fact, a special branch of the United Nations (UNWRA) exists only for the maintenance of those "refugees." In the almost sixty years of the existence of this agency it has cost many billions of dollars, most of it – you guessed it – contributed by the United States.

Jewish refugees from the Arab countries are the forgotten refugees. The world, and especially of course the Arabs, claim compensation from Israel for the Arab refugees and insist on their return to what has been Israel for almost 60 years. The Jewish refugees from Arab countries, all Israelis now, have no desire to return to their ancient homelands, where they had been treated so shabbily and so brutally. But if there is to be any compensation, those forgotten Jewish refugees are certainly entitled to such compensation as much as the Arab refugees. Anything else would be an outrage and a great injustice.

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

TWO TRADITIONS

Clifford Irving, a novelist, has had a life that would be hard to believe in a novel—even one about a con man. Born in 1930, he began a relatively successful writing career in 1956. In 1971 his new book was declined by his publisher, and, desperate for a winner, he decided to invent an "authorized autobiography" of Howard Hughes. He forged corroborative letters from Hughes so well that they convinced his publisher, and Irving was given a contract. Aided by an associate named Susskind, he then continued to fake interviews with Hughes, even with recordings. (Irving could imitate the Hughes voice passably.) Hughes himself was not approached by the publisher because Irving said that the tycoon wanted the book to remain secret while it was being prepared. The autobiography grew, a major magazine made a bid for serial rights, and the book was scheduled for publication in March 1972.

But some of the people involved in the project were suspicious. A meeting was arranged via telephone in which Hughes would testify about the book. Someone who knew Hughes was present to verify the voice. In that interview Hughes said that he had nothing to do with the book, had never met Irving, and had never even heard of him until this present meeting was broached. Irving had to return as much of the publisher's money as he could. He was convicted of fraud and served fourteen months in prison. (Susskind served five months.) Subsequently Irving has lived in Colorado and has published an account of the above, *The Hoax*, which is also the title of the film made from it. He has gone on to publish more novels.

Entertaining though *The Hoax* is, the film that I imagined before I saw it was better. I saw Irving as a latter-day avatar of a now-ingrained American type, the confidence man, a type who even antedates Melville's novel by that name. Melville and others have used him in fiction, less as a comic invention than as a tradition of the American ethical landscape, the easy confusion of new-world opportunity with new-world opportunism. I had thought that, of all people, a professional novelist like Irving would be aware of his forebears and would quite consciously enjoy stepping into one avenue of American culture, almost proud of his historical weight. And the end of the story would be a sacrifice delivered nobly as part of his historical role.

But none of this is in the film. Worse, the screenplay by William Wheeler does not provide any character pattern at all. Irving, played by Richard Gere, dejected by his publisher's refusal of his novel, is simply struck with the Hughes idea. Not a moment is given to the crisis in a published writer who is reaching a decision to fake a book. Throughout that phony book he is simply a busy workman, faking recorded interviews and forging letters, cooking up his intimacy with Hughes. Never is there a tinge of consciousness in him about his ethical situation: he just wants to slick up his fraud successfully.

TOMASZ WALENTA

THE HOAX
Miramax

PARIS, JE T'AIME
First Look

POISON FRIENDS
Strand

This portion of the film, its largest part, plus the concluding Hughes telephone quashing of the project, has a special interest for me. Twenty years before the Irving episode, when I was an editor in book publishing, my firm commissioned a biography of Hughes. The author—call him Johnson—had spent three weeks living with Hughes in the latter's palatial Las Vegas hotel suite, had interviewed him extensively, had been given a free hand by Hughes, and had subsequently published a series of vivid articles about Hughes in a national magazine. I met with Johnson and learned that he had Hughes material that he did not use in his magazine series, and I got his agreement to work all the material, from the series and his files, into a book for us. He signed a contract to deliver the manuscript in sections on agreed-upon dates, with a portion of the advance paid on each delivery of a section. The first part arrived on time and was paid for. The due date for the second part was missed. I located Johnson, and he said that he didn't want to talk on the phone. When we met, he told me that Hughes had heard about this project and didn't want it to proceed. No reason given, no appeal possible. There was no point in my firm's appealing: Johnson simply would not go ahead. He returned his advance and left me feeling—once again—that I dwelled in a world ruled by invisible forces.

Twenty years later, Irving went ahead with his own biographical project for months without interference from Hughes. (Presumably Irving must have consulted, among other sources, Johnson's magazine articles.) It seems incredible that a man with Hughes's power and connections could not have known that the spurious book was in progress. Why did he let it proceed as far as it did? Maybe it was cat-and-mouse. Maybe it amused him to let them all play their little game until he chose to smash it. (Vaguely the

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phantom of the White House flits by near the end: years earlier, Hughes had lent some money to Nixon's brother Donald, and possibly the new book would have trumpeted this fact.) I still don't really understand why the man who stopped Johnson allowed Irving to proceed.

As Clifford Irving, Gere continues to search out energies and crannies in himself that will keep him from petrifying into an aging star. He gives the role some dash, but no more depth than the script allows. Alfred Molina, a gifted actor, is miscast as Susskind, a nervous man who is worried more about his marriage than about the fraud he is abetting. Of course it is good for actors to "stretch," to try roles outside their past. But the result ought not to look like stretching. (See Albert Finney in *Rich in Love*.)

The director, Lasse Hallström, is a Swede who first came to wide attention with the lyrical *My Life as a Dog* (1985). He was brought to Hollywood and became a different, though sometimes effective, director (*The Cider House Rules*). In *The Hoax*, however, aided by his editor, Andrew Mondshein, he seems to be striving for absolute American-film citizenship. Gone is the earlier Hallström subtlety: this story is snipped back and forth in time modishly, and individual scenes are rarely left unfussy. Still, the picture holds.

Irving, who continues to write novels, has said in a *Village Voice* interview that he enjoyed a lot of the picture, but "telling my story as it really happened would be a little more complex than a lot of directors and Hollywood would want to deal with." Bingo! There's the classic stylish crook of history, a man who wants his story told properly.

THANK THE CINEMA gods for Paris. No matter what happens to all the other cities that have spawned innumerable films—New York, London, and Rome high among them—let them all cinematically wither and the Paris tradition will still fructify. My idea of punishment for a nasty criminal would be to sentence him to count all the films, by Frenchmen and others, made in and savoring of Paris.

Another one now? What a soft surprise. One small difference in *Paris, je t'aime* is certainly not its title but its shape. It is a throwback to such 1960s films as *Six in Paris*. This new one, too, is an anthology, carried even further in numbers than its predecessor. It has eighteen episodes in its two hours, done by twenty directors (an international group) and by squads of writers and cinematographers. The result is pretty much what would be expected, what in fact we basically want—some of the episodes are better than others. The real pleasure is in having a film that is like a box of assorted chocolates: you have the power to approve or not as you move through the variety, even though the bits are picked for you.

Each episode is set in a different part of Paris and intends to bring out the neighborhood's character. This doesn't always happen; many of the pieces could be set in other quarters. But at least the plan allows us to see a lot of known and lesser-known Paris. Some of the pieces are brief one-act plays; some are like breaths of mood or irony. The piece by Isabel Coixet, a Catalan, which is set in the Bastille district for no intrinsic reason, has a twist that keeps a husband from leaving his wife. *Loin du 16ème*, written and directed by the Brazilian Walter Salles and Daniela Thomas, consists simply of a juxtaposition in which two different districts play a part.

One reward of this anthology is that it gave me the chance to admire two Americans whose long works have generally left me numb. *Le Marais*, written and directed by Gus Van Sant, is a delicate draft of the beginning of a gay relationship. *Tuileries*, set in the Métro stop of that name, written and directed by Joel and Ethan Coen, is more enjoyable than anything of theirs except *Fargo*.

Not to forget, there are some French directors, too. One of them, Sylvain Choumet, provides in *Tour Eiffel* an episode with mimes, complete with clown makeup and costumes. If this picture really were a box of chocolates, we would need to take only one nibble of this one. Well, anyway, it's brief.

THOSE CINEMA GODS are never off-duty. Here comes another film set in Paris, suffering a jot from being so close to the above, because at times it seems like an extension of one of those episodes. *Poison Friends*, written and directed by Emmanuel Bourdieu, is his second film and has a slight whiff of revenge. It centers on three young men who are students. One of them, as is often the case in such groups, is the intellectual leader. In his insidious, bright, mocking style, he is endeavoring to turn his pals into intellectual nihilists. His favorite tag is the Karl Kraus line, quoted loosely here: "Who are the writers? Only those who are too weak not to write."

The student chatter, including some with women friends of course, is in that vein that pretends to be offhand though it is not. It is kept listenable—and watchable—because Bourdieu uses his knowledge of these people with winning ease. The story's conclusion verges on the grim, and it underscores Bourdieu's presumable theme: student life and talk are the last real vacations in many lives. But to the point of revenge, Bourdieu gets considerable help from Thibault Vinçon, whose substantiated arrogance holds the film together and creates that leading character. If that character really is or was a man whom Bourdieu adored/resented, he has met his come-downance. ◆

Sherwin B. Nuland
THE FEMININE MYSTIQUE

SECRETS OF WOMEN: GENDER, GENERATION, AND THE ORIGINS OF HUMAN DISSECTION
By Katharine Park
(Zone Books, 419 pp., $36.95)

A FEW WEEKS before reading Katharine Park's intriguing volume on the early history of anatomical dissection, I found myself at a luncheon where alumni of a large Ivy League university had gathered in the interest of educational sodality and fund-raising, a variety of rite commonly favored by organizations of aging graduates and their alma maters. Perhaps to prepare the mood for the postprandial speaker—a visiting art historian about to discuss the works of Leonardo da Vinci—one of the group's officers was holding forth at my table on a thesis so consistent with common preconceptions about the intellectual backwardness of the Catholic Church that it always finds a receptive audience. With a forcefulness honed by decades as a trial lawyer, he was regaling his attentive listeners with accusations of the obstinacy with which the church opposed human dissection during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. This, he pointed out as emphatically as if he were addressing a jury, had necessitated all kinds of clandestine and gruesome activities on the part of those whose aim was to study the human body, whether

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for scientific purposes or because they were artists of the caliber of Leonardo, Titian, and Raphael. Not only was medical knowledge thus stunted in its advancement, he added in his summation, but such opposition necessitated the well-known horrors of grave-robbing in order to obtain cadavers for study, an unnatural activity that marred the image of the profession of healing until late in the nineteenth century.

Were Benedict XVI present to act as advocate for his long-ago predecessors, he would have entered a plea of not guilty on their behalf. And the pope would certainly have won the ensuing debate, because the overwhelming weight of evidence supports his long-dead clients. Stated simply, the persuasive lawyer was dead wrong. Whatever difficulties may have been faced by Galileo and several other prominent scientists of that and later eras, the anatomists and the artists had few such obstructionist forces to contend with, at least from the Catholic hierarchy of the time. The truth of the matter differs markedly from what might have been thought by the old alums listening with such knowing accord to the disquisition being presented to them.

Not only did the church not stand in the way of dissection, but it frequently provided an atmosphere and means to facilitate it. Perhaps the most direct demonstration of such a supportive philosophy is to be found in a Bull issued in 1482 by Pope Sixtus IV, who responded to a request from the students and faculty of the University of Tübingen by permitting human dissection providing that local clerical permission was granted. In doing this, Sixtus was only acknowledging practices already in effect at the universities of Bologna and Padua, in both of which he had been a student and in neither of which had church authorities ever prevented the opening of corpses for the purposes of research and teaching.

Leonardo's first such studies took place in the mid-1480s, probably at Milan's Ospedale del Brolo, a unit of the Ospedale Maggiore licensed to allow dissections with the consent of the local bishop. And scarcely a decade after the Bull of Sixtus, the prior of the Church of San Spirito in Florence gave dissecting permission to, among others, a young painter named Michelangelo Buonarroti. As for grave-robbing, it is no historical aberration that the best-known escapades of famous grave robbers and their ghastly doings happen to have taken place in Protestant countries, such as England, Scotland, and the United States. The explanation for this phenomenon is clear: it was primarily in Protestant lands, not Catholic ones, that bodies were diffi cult to obtain, be cause there were stringent, often clergy-driven, laws against dissection.

I do not mean to imply that my tablemate was an ignoramus, or that his hearers were swayed by his argument because they were uneducated in the facts as presented in standard descriptions of early modern history. It is hardly their fault that current-day literature and even many textbooks have portrayed an imaginary scenario in which the church stood inexorably opposed to the Renaissance mood of rapidly emerging scientific discovery, particularly with respect to delving into the secrets of life. Every schoolboy knows that the new humanism that is the hallmark of the period manifested itself, among other ways, in a fascination with the structure and function of man's body, but every schoolboy has also been taught that the Catholic Church did what it could to halt or at least slow the scientific progress that might be the inevitable result of such a fascination. If he did not learn it in the classroom, the schoolboy read of it as portrayed in every example of the literary fiction that deals with the subject.

Title page from *On the Fabric of the Human Body* by Andreas Vesalius, 1543

COURTESY ZONE BOOKS

Katharine Park's important book has two major themes, and putting to a well-deserved rest the erroneous image of a thoroughly resistant church is one of them. True, there were certainly conspicuous instances—and again, Galileo's is the most prominent—of theological wrongheadedness and maleficent obstructionism, and even an underlying current of belief that made certain scientists of the early modern period interpret objective findings in a way that did not clash with church teachings. But in general Catholicism has taken a rap much more severe than it deserves, especially in the area of anatomy. As Park writes:

> A long historiographic tradition, dating back to at least the middle of the nineteenth century, presents religion and science as diametrically opposed cultural enterprises and the Church as deeply hostile to dissection. Th is misconception is still widespread. Generations of Italian tour guides, not to mention playwrights, journalists, and historical novelists, have waxed eloquent over the supposed moral and intellectual courage of such late fifteenth- and sixteenth-century heroes as Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Andreas Vesalius, author of *On the Fabric of the Human Body*, published in 1543, whose famous title page celebrated the study of anatomy based on dissection rather than on ancient texts. Th ese men, the story goes, defied reli gious superstition and braved persecution and censure in the service of art or science, pursuing their intellectual passion in dark cellars and back rooms with trapdoors in the floor for the quick disposal of corpses when the police (or the Inquisition, or whoever) arrived.
>
> Like the famous story associated with Christopher Columbus, whose courageous voyage of 1492 purportedly proved to a doubting public that the earth was round, this story has been debunked repeatedly by medievalists to no avail. Th e power of such fictions to weather frequent and detailed disproof

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testifies to the important cultural work they perform by supplying foundation stories that confirm deep-seated Western intuitions about the scientific origins of modernity—intuitions that continue to inform the writing of even specialists in the field.

As important as it is to demonstrate the truth of this thesis, it is in the second major theme of *Secrets of Women* that Park makes what I consider her book's greater, if more controversial, contribution to knowledge, one that will fascinate even those historians of medicine long convinced of her first proposition. It is her contention—based on evidence that she provides—that the practice of human dissection, which began in northern Italy in the late thirteenth century, was far more heavily influenced by certain vaguely disquieting notions about the female body than has hitherto been perceived or acknowledged. Some of those notions were religious, but others were of such a nature as to make of the feminine a source of curiosity about "the other" that was more than a little carnal even while it was uncomfortably fearful.

Accordingly, Park tells us, the early study of anatomy, though its ultimate purpose was to increase the scientific knowledge of physicians, was also undertaken because of conceptions of the body that were primarily religious or based on family, cultural, and sexual concerns. Owing to such considerations, Park argues, the dissection of female bodies in particular, at the behest and in the presence of religious, civic, or family personages, played an important part in laying the groundwork for emerging studies that would be done more frequently in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries under the supervision of physicians and medical schools. And even these, she points out, focused heavily on the feminine.

In other words, the medical model, in which anatomical knowledge is the basis of learned healing, was not alone as the catalyzing force behind the origins of human dissection. Rather, from the late thirteenth century on, the opening of bodies was also being performed outside of universities and hospitals, for a variety of purposes having little or nothing to do with scientific advancement. Among those purposes was to find corporeal evidence of saintliness or to establish some certainty of family lineage or history, including perhaps cause of death or clues to paternity. In such investigations, women's bodies, argues Park, took on a significance far out of proportion to their numbers among the corpses dissected, and accordingly played a central role in the early history of anatomy. Prominent among the reasons for this was the search for holy objects within the corpse, or of changes in certain viscera that would substantiate claims made during life, such as a heart containing foreign bodies thought to be holy. But often hovering in the background was an obsessive interest in what male writers of the period sometimes referred to as "the secrets of women."

Park's first example of faith-motivated dissection is the case of Chiara of Montefalco, who died in 1308. Because they considered her body a precious relic, the nuns of the monastery where Chiara was abbess decided to embalm her. On inspecting the removed organs, they discovered—or so it was claimed—a cross within the heart, as well as a structure thought to be the scourge with which Jesus was beaten during the Passion. Looking further, they found other objects deemed evidence of the abbess's closeness to the mysteries of holiness. Though uncommon, such postmortem investigations for verification of saintliness seem to have been done only on women. Park's research discovered not "a single case of the internal inspection of the body of a holy man before the middle of the sixteenth century." In time, some of these postmortem examinations came to be done by physicians, but at first they were performed by or at the initiative of women of the church.

Another reason for the prominence of dissection of female bodies was the nature of the society in which it took place. In the intensely patriarchal culture of northern Italy, where human dissection originated, it was believed that women bore within their bodies and minds certain secrets, to some of which even they themselves were not privy. Could it be accomplished, the elucidation of such secrets might shed light not only on the general topic of the mechanisms of reproduction, but also on the child-bearing and sexual histories—as well as impulses—of the women whose bodies were studied, not to mention satisfying a certain prurient inquisitiveness on the part of the male dissectors. In this regard, the female genitals, particularly the uterus, took on a significance that made them subjects of great curiosity, as laymen sought to solve all manner of riddles that these organs presented to their exploring, often suspicious, and sometimes anxious eyes. In the practical sense, evidence of paternity, basis of inability to conceive, sources of sexuality, and signs of virginity were among the reasons for which female corpses were dissected by men chosen by families or civic authorities. Not until the fifteenth century did this kind of work come to be done primarily by physicians, who were also being called upon with increasing frequency to determine cause of death. At the same time, the medical profession was taking on an ever more prominent role in childbirth and the treatment of women's diseases, making necessary some improvement in the inadequate state of contemporary knowledge of female anatomy.

TOMASZ WALENTA

With this as background, Park provides a social and religious context to the precedents upon which formal medical dissection began, and demonstrates the coherence and the continuity that she believes led to the work later done more systematically and in greater volume in hospitals and the Italian medical schools, primarily at Padua and Bologna. By doing this, she buttresses her conviction of the nature of those precedents that contributed to the more academic involvement of the physicians in the sixteenth century. Her argument favoring such a relationship and continuity is strong, though likely to remain somewhat controversial while other historians seek proof that the link is more tenuous than she claims. For example, I know of no evidence that Andreas Vesalius—whose great book had a transformative effect not only on the study of anatomy but also on the entire concept of the superiority of direct observation to ancient tomes and learned authority—was influenced by the fact of earlier dissection for the purposes of religious or sociocultural investigation. His work would appear to have grown out of the convergence of two factors beyond a few academic predecessors: a zeitgeist in which the notion of direct observation for scientific reasons was beginning to arise; and his own intense curiosity combined with a driving ambition to debunk earlier authorities and his teachers. Still, Park's work convincingly brings to consideration a virtual concomitance of cultural and scientific precedents to the development of the more formal academic studies of anatomy, the former of which is rarely if at all considered—or perhaps even known—by most historians.

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Some will argue that Park's emphasis on the "secrets of women," and the determination to probe, or snoop, into the implications of uterine structure and function, ignores the ages-old history of fascination with that organ of generation, long preceding the late thirteenth century on whose religious and sociocultural dissections she puts such stress. A major omission in her book is precisely this: the ways in which the uterus had been a source of rapt fascination for at least a millennium and a half, continuing unabated long after the period of which she writes. Why, at that particular time, should non-medical dissection have originated, when the reasons for it—including those of a patrilineally based society—had already existed for many hundreds of years?

It can be argued that the intellectual ferment that would lead to the high Renaissance was already making itself subtly evident in the thirteenth century, providing an atmosphere in which opening a body was seen as a useful and permissible way to answer questions. In such an interpretation, the same awakening forces that would eventually lead to the work of a physician such as Berengario of Carpi or Vesalius allowed the nuns of Montefalco to study the organs of their abbess. Seen this way, medical autopsy developed in parallel with the religious and sociocultural investigations, and was not influenced even in part by them. These are the kinds of issues that will inevitably be raised by those who question this implied (though, in justice to her, admittedly not stated as such) aspect of Park's thesis, and also by those who accept it and will attempt to supply evidence to refute the skeptics. Feminist historians such as Park will be prominent among the latter.

Medical theory of the time was dominated by the concept of the humors, elaborated by the Hippocratic physicians and ultimately codified by Galen in the second century C.E. By this formulation, health and disease were determined by the balance of four liquids—blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm—influenced by the four "elements"—fire, air, earth, and water—and the four "qualities"—hot, dry, cold, and wet. Using such a theoretical system, anatomy was of little consequence, except in a symbolic way. This philosophy began to change as the late Middle Ages blended into the early Renaissance, when the objective gathering of facts took on a larger role in attempts to understand the body. The result was a new emphasis on actual observation of the viscera rather than reliance on the writings of past medical theorists. As Vesalius would later put it in 1538 in *Six Anatomical Tables*, a text based on his own dissections, the investigator himself must do studies of what he called "the book of the human body that cannot lie."

And yet this new emphasis on the reality of the body's structure and function continued to co-exist, virtually unabated, with ancient fanciful notions about the uterus and female physiology in general. Park says little or nothing about this, though it would certainly have bolstered her argument that fascination with the feminine played such an important part in the motivation of the early dissectors. Still, that fascination had been of such centuries-long standing that one cannot help but wonder why after this long time there should appear the manifestations that, she tells her readers, influenced the patterns, interpretation, and pictorial representations of academic anatomical medical studies beginning late in the fifteenth century. Far more than has heretofore been appreciated, she claims, the secrets of women began to function as a key to understanding the secrets of the human. But the question remains: why only then?

Though Park does not spell this out as clearly as she might have, the answer must lie in the late medieval period's changed attitude toward opening the body, leading by parallel but unrelated paths to both outcomes—the academic and the religious and cultural dissections of which she writes so lucidly. Since earliest times and in every civilization, the most profound of women's secrets were thought to be hidden within the structure called *hystera* by the Greeks and *matrix* (from *mater*, or mother) by the Romans. Since the ovary's existence was not known until a much later period, the most concealed organ of sexuality and reproduction was the uterus, as the Romans called the womb (from *uter*, meaning "bag"). Its sexual and reproductive functions made it a mysterious thing fraught with obscure but powerful significance and unpredictable energy, perhaps even witchcraft and internal animism.

Having secrets and moods of its own, the uterus was thought to leap from place to place not only within the abdomen but as high as the throat, causing a variety of symptoms, from a choking sensation to intestinal cramping. As though to verify its willful autonomy, Plato referred to the uterus as an animal within

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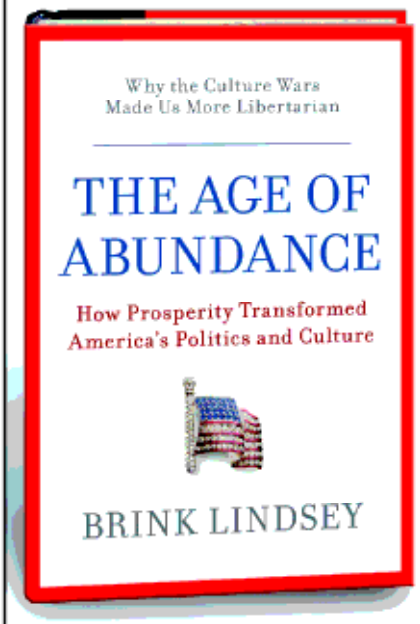
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an animal. In *Timaeus*, he argued that its overweening desire is to bear children, and that it becomes angry and thrashes about in petulance when its will is frustrated. Childbearing and sexuality being part of the same process, writers of the medieval, Renaissance, and even subsequent eras united in the notion of a condition they called "hysteria," a category into which they lumped all manner of otherwise unexplainable symptoms said to be caused by uterine wanderings in response to the thwarting of sexual or reproductive desire. Hysteria's proper treatment was to induce pregnancy if the patient was married or orgasm if she was not. As a consequence, not only women but men, too, were in thrall to its ardor.

As late as 1843, America's leading gynecologist, Charles De Lucena Meigs, was convinced that the disease known as hysteria was a manifestation of what he called the aphrodisiac force, a psychosexual phenomenon even if it was no longer necessarily associated with the uterus. Induced orgasm by masturbation, not infrequently at the hand—literally—of the physician, was a standard method of therapy for centuries. The vibrator was invented in the 1880s to deal with the problem, six years before Sigmund Freud elaborated his thesis that hysteria occurs in men as well as women, and should be treated by the psychoanalytic search for repressed childhood memories of real or fantasized seduction. The historian of technology Rachel Maines has shown that hysteria "was one of the most frequently diagnosed diseases in history," until the American Psychiatric Association removed it from its *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* after 1979.

And all of this originated in the ancient notion of the secrets of women. In 1564, the Frenchman Ambroise Paré published the magnum opus that has come down to us in an English edition of 1634 as *The Workes of That Famous Chirurgion Ambrose Parey*, describing all he had learned during his more than three decades as Europe's leading surgeon. In a section called "The Generation [Reproduction] of Man," there appears an illustration of a sort of large teakettle with an upward-pointing spout, for the treatment of hysteria. As the kettle boiled, the patient would straddle the spout so that "the matter and ingredients of sweet and aromaticke fumigations" might waft upward into her vagina and "for their sweet smell and sympathy, allure or entice the wombe downewards." Another method of accomplishing the same objective, advised Paré, was "contrariwise, let the nostrils bee perfumed with foetide and ranke smels … whose noysome or offensive flavour the wombe avoiding, doth returne unto its owne place or seate again." The wandering womb, in all its animism, mystery, and willful autonomy, must be lured or driven back to its home in the pelvis if the woman is to be restored to the submissive equanimity required by the mores of a paternalistic, but nevertheless apprehensive, society.

Park's meticulously documented book is medical historiography at its best. Whether scientific and cultural dissection were parallel or intertwined antecedents to academic medical anatomy—and if the cultural in any way contributed to the development of the medical—are matters of far less importance than her elucidation of the significance of women's bodies in the origins and early period of human dissection. It could hardly have been otherwise. A preoccupation with the secrets of the feminine had existed since ancient times, and the opening of men's minds that began in the late medieval period could only have resulted in the consequent opening of women's bodies, so as to explore and to master not only those secrets but perhaps also the ungovernable and even perfidious sex who harbored them. Whether or not in unanimous agreement with every facet of Park's thesis, the community of historians of science is in her debt. She has shed light on a notion—"the secrets of women"—that should have long ago been recognized as deserving far more attention than has been paid to it.

And not only by historians. For the underlying lesson of Park's book transcends the boundaries of time and applies to every era, including our own. When, in keeping with her theme, she states that "the mysteries of sexuality and generation, embodied in the female organs of generation, stood for the most difficult and inaccessible of the body's truths," she is telling only part of the whole story that is the unacknowledged subtext of her book. As she describes the famous illustration of the dissection of a female cadaver from Vesalius's title page, the woman is "supine and inert, in contrast to the energetic poses of audience members, but the title page also goes out of its way to emphasize the violation of propriety and female honor involved in the display of a woman's naked body to a crowd of eager men." Park believes that the function of this image is to show how the male anatomist in his medical approach—and, more specifically, Vesalius himself—had now become master of the secrets previously thought to lie hidden in the folk knowledge of women. The picture demonstrates, says Park, that Vesalius was acclaiming his triumph over the simplistic experience-based and nonscientific knowledge that women transmitted orally to one another, and was able by his dissections and his book "to transform [his teachings] into certain knowledge by anatomical demonstration, trumping their conjectural form of knowledge, which was based on haphazard experience." The secrets of women, he is symbolically claiming, were now far better known by men.

Clearly, some medical historians will disagree with such an interpretation, and I am among them. But even if Park's argument is sustained by further evidence, I would contend that it is merely a part of the story, and only an aspect of the intention of Vesalius and his illustrator. To understand the full import of the Vesalian message, one must take into account the far greater issue of just what was contained in the secrets of women. Ultimately it was female sexuality itself, and its dangerous mysteries, associated as they were with the reproductive organs of women. This was the real feminine mystique, and it had to be tamed. In

In the Confining Hour

In the confining hour, in the revealing place,
come the heart's glottal stop, come the month's restless face.

On the resistant deck, on the consoling floor,
there lies a meadowed plain, there a forgotten war.

If there are bills unpaid, if there are fates unmet,
send for the butcher's price, send for true love's regret.

Blow the wind from the north, blow the rain from the south,
pay for the marble kiss, pay for the proxy mouth.

For the confirming rod, for the concealing dress,
bring on the shadow's bloom, bring on the false caress.

WILLIAM LOGAN

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the cause of controlling it and keeping men safe from its artifices and wiles—and immune to its dangers—the early anatomists did what every other male-dominated culture had been trying to do since the dawn of time: the equivalent of forcing the uterus into a safe place. Paré controlled the capricious womb with fumigations; Vesalius did it by reducing the genitals of a woman—and a convicted criminal at that—to the object of male power, by violating and humiliating them. He had appropriated not only the secrets of women but their bodies as well, to do with as he pleased. What Park seems to have left unsaid or unrecognized is that the early dissectors' emphasis on the bodies and secrets of women was, at least in part, a symbolic form of rape. ◆

Jed Perl

MAKER AND SHAPER

THE WORLDS OF LINCOLN KIRSTEIN
By Martin Duberman
(Alfred A. Knopf, 723 pp., $37.50)

I.

Who was Lincoln Kirstein? He will always be remembered for bringing George Balanchine to America and nurturing the glorious exploit that was the New York City Ballet. But he was also a creative spirit in his own right, the author of audaciously imaginative books about sculpture and dance, as well as of several enduring experiments in the art of autobiography. Kirstein, who died in 1996 at the age of eighty-eight, was an activist and an artist, equally drawn to the life of engagement and the life of reflection.

What united his variegated activities—he wrote poetry in addition to prose and founded several magazines—was a determination to define the timeless forces that fueled the rapid-fire artistic discoveries of the modern century. On more than one occasion, Kirstein's fascination with tradition led to accusations that he was a conservative, even a reactionary. And the truth was that Kirstein sometimes welcomed and even provoked such attacks. He delighted in what he surely saw as the vulgarity of his detractors, who could not believe that his avidity for the past was inextricably related to his faith in the future—who did not understand that modernity was in fact tradition's double.

This life was almost incredible in its richness. Kirstein grew up in a wealthy Jewish family in Boston and went to Harvard, where in his early twenties he founded and co-edited a now legendary avant-garde magazine called *Hound and Horn* and organized the Harvard Society for Contemporary Art, which is widely viewed as a precursor to the Museum of Modern Art. His energy and drive, which sometimes seemed almost superhuman, were eventually complicated by periods of acute mental distress, some of which climaxed in hospitalizations. And his personal life had other intricacies, combining as it did a deep and enduring marriage to Fidelma Cadmus, the sister of the painter Paul Cadmus, with many love affairs with young men, some of whom became part of the Kirstein household. In the half-century that he made New York his home, Kirstein cut a figure in bohemian circles, befriended countless artists and writers, and built close ties with some of the city's power brokers. There were life-changing trips to Europe in the 1920s and 1930s, which shaped his understanding of ballet; and he became a great admirer of Japanese culture during visits to Japan in the late 1950s, eventually helping to arrange tours of the Gagaku dance troupe and the Kabuki theater in the United States.

No wonder one of Kirstein's oldest friends, the curator A. Hyatt Mayor, once wrote, "I might attempt a biography of Proteus, but Lincoln Kirstein? Whatever he animates, he is basically a poet in the Greek sense of a maker and shaper. He not only writes his poems, he makes them happen." Mayor meant that Kirstein's work on behalf of the New York City Ballet was itself a creative act, a leap of the poetic imagination; and I find myself coming back to this remark in the light of Martin Duberman's huge new biography. Duberman is a very able author. He has produced a book that is fluid, lucid, and intelligent. He evaluates the tangled strands of Kirstein's private life with sensitivity and generosity. And yet a reader arrives at the end of this very long book scarcely knowing who Lincoln Kirstein was.

In part the problem is that the activist overwhelms the artist; there are many pages about the political maneuverings at the School of American Ballet and City Center, but there is almost nothing about Kirstein's complex ideas or extraordinary literary style. Why this should be is not entirely clear. When it was first announced that Duberman was to write Kirstein's biography, some in the dance community worried that he was not equipped to bring to life the glories of the New York City Ballet. And perhaps that has turned out to be true. But Duberman is hardly a stranger to the arts. He has written for the theater with some distinction, and his book *Black Mountain: An Exploration in Community* is not only a classic study of the legendary college in North Carolina, but also a penetrating examination of the place of avant-garde art in American experience.

For a biography really to work, the author has to be at ease with his subject, but no matter how hard he tries, Duberman cannot seem to accept Kirstein's crankily mandarin love affair with the art of the twentieth century. While Duberman does not have a politically correct bone in his body, he is in some respects what used to be called a man of the left. And this, I suspect, makes it difficult for him to grasp the almost anarchic nature of Kirstein's free-spiritedness, which was by turns ornery, comedic, and outrageous.

Like nearly every intellectual of his time, Kirstein felt the pull of communism in the 1930s, but unlike certain other Americans who in later years became avatars of tradition in the arts, he remained something of a liberal in politics—sometimes quite liberal. He was proud of having been named after Abraham Lincoln. He participated in the freedom march from Selma to Montgomery in 1965. And, along with Balanchine, he supported the career of the young dancer Arthur Mitchell in the 1950s, when it would have been easier to accept the bigotry of those who were uncomfortable with a black man in a ballet company. While Duberman responds wholeheartedly to these clear cases of Kirstein's liberal-spiritedness, he cannot see how this liberal-spiritedness is related to something far stranger in Kirstein's makeup, namely his sure grasp of liberalism's darkest truth, which is that no matter how we may search for the patterns in art and life, there are finally no dependable patterns. And that left Kirstein with only the justice of art to believe in, which can be treacherous, paradoxical, even violent.

For Kirstein, ballet may have come closer than any other art to crystalliz-

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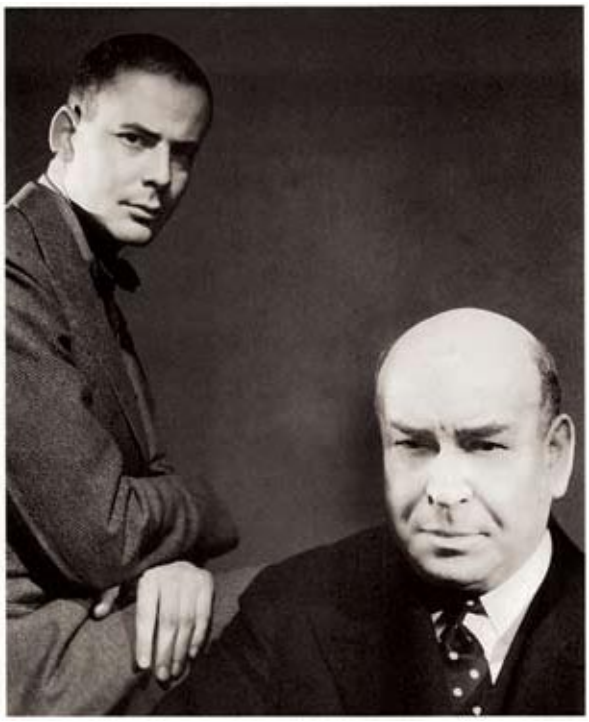
ing a new relationship between creativity and society, to suggesting the place of traditional patterns in the modern world. Writing *Mosaic*, the memoir that he published late in life, Kirstein recalled the days in 1933 when he persuaded Balanchine to come to America, and observed that "the marvelous thing about existence was that it seemed to prove the validity of an historical process despite the opposition of the ordinary." Th is is a sentence worth considering. "Existence," which I take to refer to the experience of art, released Kirstein from the ordinary pleasures of his life, which in 1933 meant his friends in London, and led him into the glorious perspectives of history and tradition. Most of the dance companies that Kirstein was seeing in the early 1930s were remnants of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, that band of creative individuals who, after being forced out of the old czarist settings by war and revolution, found themselves reimagining the dance traditions amid the chaotic democracies of western Europe. No other art form—not literature, not painting—had been so definitively sundered from its academic history, and so entirely set free in the modern world. And when the youthful Kirstein looked at the slightly older Balanchine, who had been Diaghilev's last choreographer, he had some inkling, some premonition, that here was the man who could plant this wonderful hybrid of tradition and innovation on American soil.

II.

In 1933, the photographer George Platt Lynes, a friend of Kirstein's who is best known for his studies of ballet dancers, made a formal portrait of the fledgling impresario and his father. Louis Kirstein is seated in the foreground, his large head and somber expression dominating the rather severe image, even as his appealingly youthful son mirrors the middle-aged man's concentrated gaze. Looking at the echoing expressions on the faces in this photograph, which Kirstein included among the illustrations in *Mosaic*, I find myself thinking that while the father was an immensely successful and public-spirited businessman and the son was an arbiter in the arts and an artist in his own right, they did in many ways regard the world similarly, and share some fundamental vantage point.

Kirstein's mother, Rose, came from Rochester, New York, where her family had been very successful in the retail clothing industry. And although her parents were skeptical about her marriage to Louis Kirstein, who at the time was a salesman for an optical outfit, he turned out to have something of a genius for business, becoming in the early decades of the new century a partner in Filene's, the Boston-based department store. Th e Kirsteins, though in no sense religious Jews, embraced their Judaism as a significant distinction. And for Louis, as he shifted his focus from business to civic affairs, it was essential to forge powerful connections with prominent Jewish figures, among them Louis Brandeis and Felix Frankfurter.



George Platt Lynes, *Lincoln Kirstein and Louis Kirstein*, 1933

On a trip to Bayreuth when Lincoln was a boy, the family was refused rooms in the fashionable Schwarze Adler and sent to stay in a Jewish home. Decades later, in the wake of the death camps, Kirstein would recall this experience in a poem, where there was surely some rueфulness mixed in with his old hope that the universality of art, even the art of an artist who was an anti-Semite, could trump the ugliness of human behavior. Th is was a family that embraced the cul tural sphere. Louis served on the board of the Boston Public Library. And his politics were progressive. Even during the Depression he maintained a worker-friendly environment at Filene's, receiving good marks from labor. He was a great admirer of Roosevelt, and was an important consultant to the National Recovery Act. Lincoln was the middle of three children, all of whom had distinguished careers. His sister, Mina Curtiss, published a fine memoir, a famous collection of Proust's letters, and an important study of Georges Bizet, whose *Symphony in C* provided the music for one of Balanchine's enduring creations. And his brother, George, was for a time the publisher of *Th e Nation*

Lincoln Kirstein's youthful accomplishments can leave a reader breathless. He was twenty, an undergraduate at Harvard, when he started *Hound and Horn* with Varian Fry (who would later be the literary editor of this magazine, and then instrumental in helping artists and writers escape from Nazi-occupied France). *Hound and Horn*, which lasted until 1934, was an extraordinary magazine, counting among its contributors Kay Boyle, Stephen Spender, E. E. Cummings, William Carlos Williams, Wallace Stevens, Marianne Moore, and Edmund Wilson, and carrying early photographs by Walker Evans and influential reports on developments in dance, architecture, and film. Reading Kirstein's correspondence from those years, collected in *Th e Hound and Horn Letters*, you have to be amazed at the aplomb with which this man in his early twenties corresponded with Pound and Eliot and many others. The energy and assurance are not easy to account for. But if it is impossible to explain away Kirstein's self-possession by pointing out that his father's money was essentially paying for *Hound and Horn*, it is also enormously moving to see Kirstein's parents, this wealthy and civic-minded but in many respects conventional Jewish couple, giving their fierce and consistent support to a son whose path was bohemian, erratic, and sometimes inexplicable.

What comes through in Duberman's biography is a tale of two generations—how the old-style philanthropic populism of the early twentieth century was transformed into the avant-garde populism that would have its greatest expression in George Balanchine's company, a company that did indeed have a populist name, the New York City Ballet. Th e Kirsteins were not rich enough singlehandedly to bankroll a ballet school or

COURTESY FARRAR, STRAUS AND GIROUX

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a ballet company, and part of what Lincoln inherited from his father was an ease in moving in the monied world, where he could find the necessary funds. When Kirstein persuaded Balanchine to come to America in 1933, the financial backing came from Edward Warburg, who supported the School of American Ballet for many years. Until mid-century, when Kirstein came into his inheritance, he was generally short of funds, and he spent a great deal of time going to others for money. (Nelson Rockefeller was often good for a substantial check.) Through it all, his parents remained a source of nearly endless financial support. Even at the end of the 1940s, when Balanchine was associated with City Center and the New York City Ballet was becoming a reality, there were still calamitous financial crises. In 1948 the ballet ran a deficit of $47,000 (more than $300,000 in today's dollars), and it was Kirstein's mother who "picked up the tab," as Duberman explains, "overriding the advice of trust managers and lawyers alike." There is something extraordinary in this story of an elderly Jewish lady, the daughter of a Rochester clothing merchant, who out of a deep faith in her artistic son went against the counsel of her financial advisers and wrote the huge check that helped to insure the future of an art.

Kirstein's career is a rare, perhaps unique case of old-fashioned public-spiritedness carried to the level of artistic genius. His accomplishments boggle the mind. He was an active collaborator in Walker Evans's early explorations of the nineteenth-century architecture of New England. He founded *Dance Index*, a beautiful small magazine that explored ballet history and employed, among others, Joseph Cornell, who designed many of the journal's unusual covers and created several special issues, based on his own collection of dance memorabilia. Kirstein spearheaded a host of mural projects that were exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in 1932, and in the 1940s Alfred Barr sent him to South America to scout developments in contemporary art for the museum. He was involved in the founding of the Shakespeare Festival in Stratford, Connecticut. And all the while he was writing books. Oh yes, and working to give Balanchine a secure home in America, a labor that culminated in the opening of the New York State Theater at Lincoln Center in 1964. Nobody has done more to give the loftiest artistic achievements their rightful place in a democratic society.

III.

Lincoln Kirstein is sometimes portrayed, and sometimes liked to portray himself, as a believer above all else in rigid standards in art and in life. In an early book, *Blast at Ballet*, in 1937, he defined ballet as an "exact science." His writings are full of allusions to the military discipline of the dancer's life, with its daily classes that are like the soldier's daily drill. And he had a lifelong love of uniforms, later recalling about the premiere of *Union Jack*, Balanchine's salute to British folk tunes and military manners, that his father had dressed him at the age of five "in a naval rating's uniform," and proudly explaining that the costumes for the first movement of *Union Jack* were "provided by a Canadian firm which specialized in tailoring traditional military kilts and sporrans."

Kirstein's life can in certain respects be characterized as unpredictable, self-indulgent, and even undisciplined. And some readers of Duberman's biography may be a bit bemused by Kirstein's fascination with exactitude and discipline, and tempted to dismiss this as contrariety, even as a form of camp. Psychologically, Kirstein probably had the manic-depressive's hunger for some norm—something steady, dependable, absolute. But there was a metaphysical dimension to his attitude as well, for he surely believed that discipline and exactitude offered the possibility of self-invention, an absolute order that the individual could embrace through a process of self-transformation. While not anybody can wear any uniform, there are many uniforms—the uniform of an army officer, or a dancer's practice clothes—that many people can earn the right to wear if they work hard enough. Even a person's physique and physical capacities can be transformed, at least up to a point, as Balanchine demonstrated when he produced, within a generation, a group of American ballet dancers as formidable as any the world had ever seen. For Kirstein, self-invention without a strong dose of discipline and idealism was nothing more than a prescription for anarchy, a form of self-aggrandizement that condemned a person to go around in circles instead of forward.

In the world that Kirstein knew in the 1930s and 1940s, nearly everybody could be said to have invented themselves. His father was a self-invented millionaire. Balanchine was trying to figure out how to make a career in the West. Muriel Draper, whom Kirstein counted as a mentor in the 1930s, had been married to Paul Draper, a much-admired singer before he succumbed to alcohol and drugs. Muriel "returned to New York during World War I penniless but undaunted," Kirstein recalled in *Mosaic*. "She maintained a ragged salon in a bleak loft over a garage on East 40th Street, where on Thursdays she kept up an ironic parody of her London and Florentine grandeur, which was a delight of the town and where one could meet anyone who, at the time, figured in the High Bohemia of Manhattan." Although Kirstein's parents regarded Draper as "a menace," as she was nearly twenty years his senior and they were perhaps not unaware that he was sleeping with her, "I owed her much of whatever solid intellectual or moral development I may have made."

Kirstein described Muriel as the "judge and oracle of most of my activity." She taught him, so he recalled, "to make snap judgments tested by inner checks and self-doubts." This same lesson, a lesson in psychological decisiveness, was what Kirstein said that he learned from Gurdjieff, the savant whose strange school at Fontainebleau he visited. Gurdjieff seems to have looked upon Kirstein as one of the wealthy young people who might provide funds for what amounted to a sort of self-invented religious cult, one that Kirstein admired but with large reserves of skepticism.

Often Kirstein's money, together with people's exaggerated ideas about how much of it he actually had, left him painfully aware of the sheer desperation of the artistic life. His collaboration in the early 1930s with Romola Nijinsky on the biography of her husband, who by that time was locked up in an asylum in Switzerland, could become a pitched battle, with Romola always determined to squeeze more money out of Lincoln. In the early years he never had enough money to do what he hoped, and he was constantly wondering what people wanted of him—and what he was prepared or able to give. Yet he was too much the artist himself—and had too much of a Jew's stirring egalitarianism—to ever really see the world in terms of an "us" and a "them," whether the separation had to do with race or class or even sexuality.

Duberman describes an excursion with the film-maker Sergei Eisenstein, who shared Kirstein's interest in men: "a tour of New York City's queer 'low-life,' of which Lincoln had considerable knowledge. They went first to the notorious Sand Street YMCA in Brooklyn and asked a sailor if any new places had opened. He pointed them around

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the corner, where they walked through a dark passageway and emerged 'into a dive full of sailors and tarts.'" Such tours of the erotic outskirts of the city were an aspect of the high life of Art Deco Manhattan. In this case, however, the topsy-turvy glamour of high meeting low is complicated by Kirstein's sense of being always, at least metaphorically, an outsider, so that the escapade ends up sounding more like something out of Paul Goodman than Cole Porter.

Only a man who responded to all kinds of people on a deep and immediate level, who understood the stirrings of optimism and the fear of failure that everybody shares, could have written *Rhymes of a PFC*, one of Kirstein's most impressive and least appreciated books. Published in 1964, *Rhymes of a PFC* is not so much a collection of poems as it is an epic comprised of many tiny chapters—a soldier's experience of World War II filtered through a cacophony of voices. The tone is dense and blunt, saturated with the jangling rhymes that we know from popular songs. Serving in Europe in 1944, Kirstein never saw combat, but he was close to it, and at the end he did valuable work, recovering works of art hidden in mines by the Nazis. It is difficult to capture the quality of this book through brief quotations. There is Major McGeek, "Tall, dark, handsome, we believed he shat by the book—/A model of army-manual deportment and a common crook." And there is Joseph Jones Jr., "brisk as a diet of wheat-germ and ball-game could make him … dead and gone your merit heats us still, like liquor, a straight shot." One soldier describes the grinding hell of a life lived out-of-doors:

> Worse thing was cold. Cold, cold;
> all the time, cold.
> I mind the cold most. Weeks we never
> git warm.
> Bastone. We have two K-rations a day.
> That's all. No warmth.
> Cold. Jeez-us. Particularly your fuckin
> feet.

Yet the beauties of Europe are here too, as in a French farm that "is France entire, in peacetime as in war; / Its order and its amplitude, now as ever before." And then there is Kirstein, stationed near Manchester, reading that Gielgud and Ashcroft are doing *Hamlet* and sneaking off the base to see this production that "assumes a superfetation of truth."

> Ophelia (Peggy Ashcroft) was
> sideswiped by a flying bomb
> Only two days before.
> She goes daft with a bandaged wrist;
> her performance gains pow'r
> therefrom;
> That's what Theater's *for*.
> Gielgud beggars description; if its
> begetter could only have seen
> His Hamlet to the life.
> Our hearts are cleft in twain.

Rhymes of a PFC is a modern American epic, with ambitions that must be understood in relation to works such as *The Bridge* (Kirstein had known Hart Crane slightly), *Paterson*, and the *Maximus Poems*; the tangle of voices recalls Dos Passos's *U.S.A.* as well. What Kirstein has created is a collage of voices and emotions, with the author functioning as a very personal narrator. When *Rhymes of a PFC* was first published, Auden noted the influence of Browning, Hardy, and Kipling, and described the book as presenting a new anti-heroic chapter in the history of war poetry. "As a picture of the late war," he wrote, "*Rhymes of a PFC* is by far the most convincing, moving, and impressive book I have come across." And indeed to open this book is to find something strange and powerful and unique—an intellectual's avid embrace of the American panorama as it revealed itself in the muddy camps where "it's no cinch to live together / in a field three acres square." This was the book in which Kirstein most fully revealed his deep, avid humanity.

IV.

For all that Kirstein liked to speak about the ideal order of classical ballet, the ballet as he knew it and as he lived it was a seat-of-the-pants operation. Watching the extraordinary documentary *Ballets Russes*, released a few years ago and directed by Dan Geller and Dayna Goldfine, you get some sense of what Kirstein was coping with. In the 1930s and 1940s, the finest dance was a product of European exiles and kids from the American heartland who were thrown together in conditions of almost constant uncertainty. There were never enough rehearsals or enough money, tours were mad dashes from city to city (often a city a day), and yet out of this insanity there emerged, as you can see in some of the brief vintage footage included in this fine movie, the clean attack, the speed, the prismatic power that would come to be associated with the New York City Ballet.

TOMASZ WALENTA

Even the School of American Ballet was for many years not the stable institution it would eventually become. Established in 1934—a few months after Hans Hofmann founded his own school in New York, which would be as influential in the world of painting as Balanchine's in the world of dance—the School of American Ballet had more than its share of financial cliffhangers and clashing personalities. And Balanchine, although devoted to the school, was often the biggest question mark of all. His health was extremely shaky during his early years in the United States, throwing his future completely into doubt. And until the New York City Ballet was established at the end of the 1940s, his attention was drawn in many directions—to Broadway, to Hollywood, to other ballet companies. Duberman gives an excellent sense of Kirstein's almost instinctive genius in organizational matters. As good as he was at plunging ahead at the right moment (raising money, organizing people, getting an operation going), he also knew when to back off (lying low, turning his attention elsewhere, simply allowing things to unfold). This hyperactive impresario could also be cunningly patient.

It has sometimes been said, and with varying degrees of irony, that Balanchine and Kirstein had nothing much to do with each other, that Kirstein did not really like Balanchine's abstract ballets, and that the ballet company of Kirstein's dreams would have focused on full evening productions of *The Sleeping Beauty* or some such thing. Kirstein certainly had a taste for traditional costumes and spectacles—as, indeed, Balanchine did as well; witness *The Nutcracker*, *Don Quixote*, *Harlequinade*, and *Vienna Waltzes*. But nobody who has read Kirstein on *Agon* can imagine that he was not entirely attuned to Balanchine's magic. Nobody but Kirstein, having pointed out that "*Agon* presents more concentrated structural dance material in twenty minutes than most nineteenth-century full-length ballets," could have gone on to give that observation a metaphysical dimension, observing that "time, as we clock it, is a fiction or device of our measuring. Before and After are loose concepts in relation to an Order which permanently *is*." If there were spectacles that Kirstein regretted that he would never see on Balanchine's stage, he also understood that responding to what was truly authen-

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tic in your own time meant accepting the historical inevitability of certain forms. You did not choose the percussive angularity of *Agon*. It chose you.

In the finest dance writing of Kirstein's maturity—the big book on the New York City Ballet, published in 1973, and *Nijinsky Dancing*, published two years later—we encounter an art form that is anything but an exact science. The City Ballet book, written in a diaristic manner that Duberman explains is partly a literary invention, celebrates the spontaneity that is essential to any performing arts organization. Here is how Kirstein introduces *Agon*, in an entry dated April 1957:

> Balanchine preoccupied with roses; more satisfactory than choreography or cooking. Blossoms are perfection, blooming without excuse or complaint; they smell good, die quickly; hundreds of old, plenty of new kinds. Later he called me, having received piano score for Stravinsky's *Agon*; the music was more "appetizing" than roses or kitchens.

I have always liked this vignette of the choreographer puttering around in his garden until the score arrives, with its easy evocation of the everydayness out of which artistic miracles can arise. It is a perfect illustration of Kirstein's belief that existence, the intense experience of art, can push us past the ordinary, into "the validity of an historical process." And Kirstein, in spite of his fascination with tradition, had a modern man's belief not only in historical process but also in historical progress. In writing about the Stravinsky Festival in 1972, he referred to Balanchine's *Violin Concerto* and *Symphony in Three Movements* as "startling innovations—as far ahead of *Agon* as *Agon* had been of *Orpheus* or *Apollon*." Note that "ahead," a word that only an avant-gardist could love.

Considering that Kirstein had devoted many of the central energies of his life to a dance revolutionary, it was not surprising that his last large book about dance was dedicated to another one, Nijinsky. At the outset of *Nijinsky Dancing*, Kirstein reiterates some of his earliest convictions, arguing that "ballet is order. It is a classic or rational form, depending on group assent and group responsibility, yet managed through autocratic control." He is also quick to admit how rarely that ideal is achieved, and he is under no illusion as to the debased character of the Russian dance world in Nijinsky's youth. The Russian ballet at the beginning of the twentieth century was "ostentatious, retardative, and repetitive," Kirstein writes, and the imperial school where Nijinsky was trained was "a decadent imperial forcing-bed that he repudiated only just before it repudiated him." Far from being the representative of an academic tradition, Nijinsky was a renegade, re-inventing dance in *The Afternoon of a Faun*, *Jeux*, and *The Rite of Spring*. "Beauty," Kirstein observes, "always exists to be raped and revived in some other vitality by marvelous spirits who arrive armored or disguised as beasts. Such animals, seemingly blind, deaf, or dumb, propose new dimensions." Nijinsky was "a quiet if ferocious opponent of the habitual, although his fiercest energy depended on habits of classroom *barre* and daily rehearsal. He was the subtlest of subversives, for he took a formulated regimen of ancient and frozen complexity and, divesting it of mechanical response, uncovered alternatives in energetic simplicity and novel thrust."

Temperamentally Balanchine was nothing like Nijinsky, but he also rejected a frozen complexity in favor of a new kind of energy and thrust. He was often accused of regarding his dancers as dumb animals—impersonal, emotionless. He was said to have rejected the star system. "Don't think, dear," he instructed his dancers, "do." Yet Balanchine could say this because he knew that his dancers were full of ideas, because they were indeed among the most sophisticated performing artists who had ever lived. People who saw the company in the 1940s and 1950s and 1960s knew generations of dancers I never saw, but to see Kent, Farrell, McBride, Verdy, and Villella in the 1970s was to witness the triumph of individualism as the re-invention of the self within tradition. When Balanchine rejected an old-fashioned, sepia-toned notion of stardom, it was in order to re-imagine stardom as something that emerged from the hurly-burly of the brilliantly illuminated streets of New York, those streets where Kirstein had been starting out in the 1930s. At the New York City Ballet, an ideal order was reframed amid America's democratic vistas, and it is difficult to imagine anything that could have made Kirstein happier.

All theater tends to blur the line between artistic experience and social experience, and the greatest theatrical experiences can create the illusion that art and society are one. For half a century—from the first performances of *Serenade* in 1935 to the retirement of Suzanne Farrell from the New York City Ballet in 1989, six years after Balanchine's death—the New York City Ballet reflected New York's

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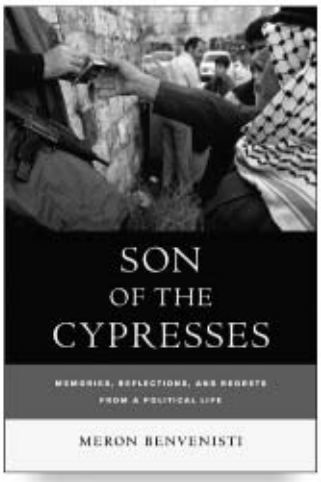
—Peter Nabokov, author of *A Forest of Time*



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speed and variety, its toughness and its intensity. When people speak of Shakespeare's London, they are suggesting that a great theatrical artist can define an age, and in years to come I am sure that many are going to describe Balanchine's New York in precisely the same way.

V.

Martin Duberman does not really demonstrate that Kirstein's absorption with ballet was related to his interest in any number of other arts. Although he discusses Kirstein's pioneering work on the nineteenth-century American sculptor William Rimmer, whose fiercely muscular figurative style has an enduring interest, he fails to underscore the consistency in Kirstein's preoccupation with sculpture, ranging from the studies of Rimmer and Augustus Saint-Gaudens, among the subtlest of late nineteenth-century American artists, to Gaston Lachaise and Elie Nadelman in the twentieth century. And he does not stress enough how this interest in representational sculpture is linked with Kirstein's obsession with the body in motion, a connection that is quite evident in the case of Nadelman, who drew and sculpted many dancing figures.

I have the impression that Duberman regards Kirstein as a bit of a crackpot when it comes to the visual arts, and there are those who will agree. Some of the contemporary painting that Kirstein prized was conservative in the worst sense of the word. He thought much too much of his brother-in-law Paul Cadmus's work, as well as that of Cadmus's friends Jared French and George Tooker. His enthusiasm for the Wyeths, father and son, was fairly ridiculous. And although the book about his old friend Pavel Tchelitchev that Kirstein published in 1994 offers a moving portrait of the bohemian side of Russian emigré life, it isn't really supportable as an aesthetic argument. I can see why Kirstein was interested in Tchelitchev's later compositions, with their evocations of the human form as a sort of mystical universe of glowing bones and musculature, but such ideas are far more compellingly expressed in the work of other artists—André Masson, Stanley William Hayter, Picasso. Still, once you have taken stock of everything that is downright eccentric in Kirstein's view of the visual arts, there is a lot left to admire, beginning with his essays on Walker Evans and Cartier-Bresson, pioneering studies written in the 1930s and 1940s, which have remained a standard for photographic criticism down to our day. And in his writings on Saint-Gaudens, Kirstein did an extraordinary job of rescuing an artist of rare refinement from the dross of America's Gilded Age.

Then there were Kirstein's labors on behalf of Nadelman. He is one of the commanding figures in twentieth-century art, a sculptor right up there with Brancusi, Arp, Giacometti, and David Smith—and yet his achievement was almost totally forgotten when Kirstein went to visit Nadelman's widow shortly after the artist's death in 1946. Duberman quotes some reserved, even dismissive remarks about Nadelman by Meyer Schapiro and Alfred Barr, made at the time that Kirstein was involved with the organization of the memorial show at the Museum of Modern Art in 1948. He does not seem entirely sure that Nadelman was not another of Kirstein's crackpot enthusiasms. This is disheartening to hear from Kirstein's biographer, for to write about Kirstein without believing in Nadelman is nearly as strange as writing about Kirstein without believing in Balanchine.

Duberman does not have much to say about the great book that Kirstein published on Nadelman in 1973, a book that represents his literary style at its ripest and most convincing. This prose is by turns lyrical, grandiose, slangy, and obscure. It is very much a modernist style, a style in which the baroque gesture becomes an individualistic assertion. Kirstein harks back to the bold romanticism of Melville and Carlyle while absorbing the densities of Henry Adams and late Henry James and the mingling of the quotidian and the mythological in Yeats, Joyce, and Pound.

Nadelman was a Polish Jew who had great success in Paris early in the twentieth century with marble heads that harked back to nineteenth-century Neoclassicism even as they paralleled the simplifications and distortions of Picasso and Matisse. He was an artist whom Kirstein could not help but like—for his urbanity, his absorption in traditional forms, his fascination with the contemporary scene, even his frequently melancholy disposition. Nadelman was living in New York after World War I and made a name for himself with a series of commissioned portrait busts that lent a classical chic to some of Manhattan's most prominent women. At the same time, his interests were turning to the eloquent forms of American folk art, from which he derived a cycle of wood carvings of society figures, singers, and musicians that combined formal purity and caricatural playfulness with a sureness unlike anything since Seurat. He had married a wealthy woman, and before she lost her money in the Depression they had built a great collection of American folk art. By the 1930s, Nadelman had ceased to show his sculpture and was becoming increasingly reclusive, even as his work moved into a new creative phase, with figures in plaster and terra cotta and papier-mâché that by turns suggested a little girl's adorable porcelain dolls, the late Hellenistic elegance of Tanagra figurines, and the blunt erotic force of prehistoric fertility goddesses.

Kirstein had been writing for half a century when he published his book on Nadelman, and his writing here has a high-flying epigrammatic force that at times suggests pages snatched from a Nietzschean notebook: "His aesthetic derived from Hellas; his metaphysic from Byzantium." Kirstein's sentences are written to be savored, to be examined from various angles, almost as if the sentence were a piece of sculpture. "As a poverty-stricken provincial aspirant," he writes, "Nadelman had nourished himself on ambition. His images of insouciant godlings in arrogant health, independent of human need, sprang from the secret protest in a poor dandy's erudition." This observation on the sleek perfection of Nadelman's early sculptures is beautiful in its unearthing of their psychological urgency. Speaking of Nadelman's later work, the Tanagra-like figurines that miniaturized the massive scale of classic art, he offers this delicious mouthful: "Superhuman constructs of chryselephantine splendor and divine proportion shrink to rococo baked-earth homunculi." The hyperbolic abstraction of Kirstein's prose can sometimes suggest the late-night conversations of great friends, when the thinking has gotten so lofty and so baroque that you can't tell if you are getting to the bottom of things or just getting lost. "Was Nadelman only a self-conscious artist," Kirstein asks, "or a soul attempting to probe consciousness in a self?"

Like Nadelman, Kirstein was a secular Jew—which suggests both a mask and an unmasking, although neither may have ever been quite sure if his Jewishness was the mask or something hidden behind the mask. When Kirstein writes of Nadelman that "his early mask melted into a matured expression," I cannot help but think of all the portraits that Kirstein commissioned of himself, especially the early heads by Lachaise and Noguchi, which do indeed have the quality of masks. In these portraits Kirstein's face is a self-conscious mask, and as a man of the theater Kirstein knew that there was

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no end to what a mask might reveal about the consciousness in a self. Writing about Nijinsky, he confronted an artist who was most truly himself when he was masked, who was said to be practically invisible in civilian life but acquired a startling reality on stage, in productions engineered by his lover, Diaghilev. Balanchine, too, had lessons to teach about the heightened reality of the theatrical mask, for in his theater ordinary Americans—Diana Adams, Edward Villella, Suzanne Farrell—became emblematic figures.

Both Diaghilev and Balanchine turned the dancers with whom they were erotically involved or merely fascinated into theatrical forces, and thereby suggested that the illusions of the stage were more real than life itself. For those who live near the stage, or feel as if they are only truly alive when they are on the stage, the whole question of sexuality and sexual attraction can take on an added dimension, since in the theater eroticism is always at once masked and unmasked. And there may be something of this theatrical play of masks and unmaskings in Kirstein's complex bisexuality, in his mythologization of certain lovers, in his fascination with particular physical types.

For Kirstein, populism and elitism were also a pair of masks, as inextricably linked as the old masks of comedy and tragedy. When Kirstein wrote his book about Nadelman, he was anything but a populist; he was writing for the smallest imaginable audience, interested only in those readers who were capable of grasping the nuances of his most idiosyncratic prose. Yet there was always another side to Kirstein, the side that wanted art's most complicated truths to be available to as many people as could possibly absorb them, and who labored long and hard to make sure that Balanchine's difficult and beautiful art found an ever-growing audience in the 1950s and 1960s. In his fierce individualism and his passionate sense of community, in his desire to both safeguard the mysteries of art and make art available to a widening public—in all of this Lincoln Kirstein was quintessentially the American artistic spirit. ◆

Boris Fishman
A CIGARETTE AND A WINDOW

THE BROOKLYN NOVELS: SUMMER IN WILLIAMSBURG, HOMAGE TO BLENHOLT, LOW COMPANY
By Daniel Fuchs
(Black Sparrow Books, 927 pp., $24.95)

First things first: Marketing 101. You are a small independent publisher looking to revive an unjustly forgotten novelist of the 1930s. Last year you brought out, to appreciations from John Updike on down, a judiciously slim volume of his writings from Hollywood, where he decamped in 1940 after three decades in the dreary tenements of Jewish New York. This year, you decide to re-issue the trio of technically accomplished but dramatically modest Brooklyn novels whose flimsy sales sent him chasing the sunshine in California. Do you publish them separately, none longer than 360 pages? Or, as Black Sparrow Books has done, do you bind all three into a thousand-page homicide of a brick, as likely to draw crowds as a case of the plague?

But Black Sparrow's disservice to its profit margin—and to the likelihood that these novels will gather a larger audience now than they did the first time around—is a boon to Daniel Fuchs. For the novels must be read in rapid succession, as they describe, in a devastating and implacable arc, a young writer's passage from the vast hope of youth through the disillusionment of knowledge to a cringing disgust with the violence of a low world. They should be required reading for any contemporary downtown Jewish hipster waxing sentimental about what *bubbe* and *zayde* were up to on the Lower East Side.

Fuchs, who died in 1993, was born in 1909 on Rivington Street, now the heart of that neighborhood's rebirth, in those days home to endless rows of sweaty, cramped tenements. Five years later, after an interlude in eastern Brooklyn, the Fuchses moved to Williamsburg, across the East River from the Lower East Side. When Fuchs's father, a concessionaire in a Manhattan office building, traveled around the metropolis delivering Christmas-candy orders, young Daniel followed. But Fuchs could never shake the sense that there was no release from Williamsburg. Owing to the Depression or to their own fears, its erstwhile shtetl dwellers slowly succumbed to a dispiriting, incestuous torpor, taking their children—Fuchs's contemporaries—with them. With his three Brooklyn novels—*Summer in Williamsburg* (1934), *Homage to Blenholt* (1936), and *Low Company* (1937), cumulatively a counterhistory to the official triumphant bildungsroman of modern American Jewry—Fuchs would establish himself as the pre-eminent chronicler of this malaise. His fatalism about the Brooklyn fate grew greater with each novel, and, like an invention of the Greeks, he escaped to California before he was consumed by the slow fire of his own insight.

Summer in Williamsburg opens with Meyer Sussman, the neighborhood butcher, taking gas through a basketball bladder connected to a gas pipe. This unexplainable death—the butcher had been successful and happy in marriage—sends twenty-year-old Philip Hayman, an aspiring writer, reeling: "When you meet God, Meyer Sussman, ask Him for me what made you squeeze the basketball bladder over your face. Little God in Heaven, sitting somewhere on a cloud, where are You?" Philip—who hardly knows what the world around him means, let alone how that meaning could disappoint enough to drive someone to suicide—turns to Old Miller, a neighbor who recites prayers over graves for pocket change at a nearby cemetery. "You must make a laboratory out of Williamsburg to find out what touched [Sussman] here," Old Miller tells him. "You must pick Williamsburg to pieces until you have them all spread out on your table before you, a dictionary of Williamsburg. And then select. Pick and discard."

In fact, Philip's gaze is too wide, and most of *Summer in Williamsburg* is encyclopedic in the manner of a young person encountering the world—taking it in indiscriminately, unsure which parts of it matter and which can be safely ignored:

> Inland the tenements seemed abandoned and resembled for the day ruins of an early time. On summer weekdays and nights there were always hundreds of people thronging the streets and a constant flow of traffic. The emptiness now took on all a stranger significance by contrast. The grocery and butcher stores, closed by municipal law, had their green blinds drawn in front of their windows. A candy store here

Boris Fishman is writing a book about Russians, Jews, and America.

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> and there dozed in the mid-afternoon heat until the subways restored its customers. A pair of ice picks, hanging neglected over the iron railing of a tenement basement, indicated that here at other times Italian icemen did a noisy, open-air business. A few sleepy cats nosed deliberately in cans of garbage for scraps. An old woman shuffled down the street, and this completed the effect of lifelessness.

Such observations read less like a novel than a dutiful transcript of sketches for one—a nifty animation of an unseasoned writer like Philip. (These passages are also the direct ancestors of the tiresome pages of reportorial description that mar Philip Roth's Newark novels.) Fuchs, who was all of twenty-five when he published the novel, knew better, though Philip does not. This was not the last time that Fuchs would sacrifice the quality of his prose to what he felt was the truth of his art.

If Philip takes too much in, still he fails to look very far: most of his questing takes place, at least psychologically, inside Williamsburg, where "things moved in circles, nothing happened." (Though he attends City College, it is the source of no scenes or influences.) The reasons for this remain largely withheld, and this is frustrating, because Williamsburg—"the garbage cans, the dirty streets, and a wet, hot sun pouring suffocating heat over dark, close rooms"—seems like a place well worth leaving.

In Williamsburg—where, hemmed in by Irish and Italian gangs, Fuchs grew up in "fear that possessed and constricted us," as he wrote to the critic Gabriel Miller—the options are stark. There is Mr. Hayman, Philip's father, an Old Worlder so aggrieved by America's crass commercialism that he wants only "a cigarette and a window," an "isolation to protect himself" from further reminders of the place he has chosen to live out his days. (Like Fuchs's father, he sells newspapers in a Manhattan skyscraper.) On the other side is Philip's maternal uncle Papravel, the boss of a ring of small-time thugs who have been hired by a local busline owner to squeeze out a competitor, which he manages with both efficacy and ingenuity. "There was the choice … Papravel or his father. Papravel, smoking cigars, piled up money and glowed with sweat and happiness, while his father sat with his feet on the windowsill in the dimness of a Williamsburg flat." Philip understands that his father is a tragic anachronism, but he cannot help "respect[ing] so deeply this man who, with no bitterness of spirit but rather with still faithful obedience to his principles, accepted his fortune and minded not that it was bad." Tender toward Philip, the man is one of Yiddish literature's heroic endurers, the saint of a different place and time. In America, he can give his son little more than the self-pity of nostalgia.

Philip has a fellow searcher in his friend Cohen, so archetypal in his romantic howls at the heavens that he is not even given a first name. Cohen is sufficiently self-conscious to find Williamsburg stifling, but not intelligent enough to see through self-importance or resist self-pity: "Cohen felt acutely a personal divinity and it was a source of considerable inner distress. Consequently, he spoke with just enough trace of quiet fine suffering, of the beauty, poetry, and poignant pathos of existence." In gusts of yearning, Cohen adopts and discards laughable poses—an urbane movie star, a brawler in a mêlée on the beach, a member of the Communist Party—and Fuchs skewers him heartlessly, down to his repugnant appearance: "He was ugly with his pimples. His hair was thin, and he had to oil it and plaster it over the bald spots." These days, a figure such as Cohen might seem bold for warding off the compromises of adulthood until he knows himself fully, whatever pretensions this may require. But in Fuchs's setting, he is a schlemiel. No, worse: Cohen dares to ignore the gruesome choice—Mr. Hayman or Uncle Papravel—that Williamsburg imposes on all its inhabitants, and the author dispatches him in a tenement fire.

Philip proudly resists Cohen's indulgence, preferring what he imagines to be an undeluded realism. If there is no way out of Williamsburg, at least he won't sugarcoat his destiny. But in practice, this means that he stifles himself. He chides himself for being too revealing about his uncertainties in a letter to a wealthier friend, and when a neighborhood girl named Tessie, who spurned Philip to marry a more stable prospect, decides that she is unhappy and makes overtures to Philip, he derides her for failing to keep her bargain. In Philip—who seems unable to imagine a rejection of his father and Papravel both—Mr. Hayman's mournful quiescence becomes a bludgeon.

Tellingly, the novel ends with Papravel's hostile takeover of the bus company that hired his crew of bruisers: "I don't care what anybody says, America is a wonderful country," he gloats. "Look how I worked myself up in four short years.… Where, I want to know, where in the world could a Jew make such a man of himself as right here in America?" In Fuchs's scowling universe, only the unsuccessful are graceless, and fortune smiles only for the Papravels. Just as he has overtaken the bus line, the railroad company announces it will move only freight, sending its passengers to the buses on the roads.

As for Philip, he is denied relief even from his purgatory. The novel has no climax. In a peculiar metatextual aside, Fuchs has Philip explain:

> People did not live in dramatic situations.… A book was an artificial synthesis, the product of a man's idea, to illustrate through his stress on characters and situations certain principles in which he was interested. Take Ripple Street … and reproduce it faithfully and you would have a great formless mass of petty incident, the stale product of people who were concerned completely with the tremendous job of making a living so that tomorrow they would be able to make a living another day.

Fuchs's creative choice—to deny any kind of resolution to a place where "poetry and heroism did not exist"—is deeply unsettling. The Philip Haymans with whom Fuchs grew up never saw beyond their bewildered despair, and Fuchs—an apparent realist who may have been his contemporary Henry Roth's equal in modernist temperament—sacrificed the end of his novel, committing great cruelty to his characters, to drive home the bitter homiletical point.

By *Homage to Blenholt*, the occasional hopefulness of *Summer in Williamsburg* (which sold four hundred copies, many bought by Fuchs's colleagues at the Brighton Beach school where he taught) had curdled. We meet Max Balkan, another young tenement dreamer, this one seeking power and glory rather than wealth. "I don't want to be like everybody else," he tells his uncomprehending girlfriend Ruth. "It's dingy, dirty, small, and uncomfortable.… Living in a flat like this with a bathroom on top of you, going to a job all day and to the movies twice a week.… You're dead years before your time." Max has other aspirations: "Take King Arthur, Shakespeare. In all great classical works, what made them classics was the distinguishing characteristic of heroism and nobility.… [Max] meant to look for heroism in his own life, to live with meaning and vigor."

Max's lodestar in this enterprise is a certain Blenholt, a slick neighborhood pol who, in his richly symbolic role as com-

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missioner of sewers, made a livelihood of racketeering and graft. But Max is undeterred: "Let other people call him a gangster, but to me Blenholt … was a kind of king, like the ancient Romans and Greeks, like the glorious Renaissance tyrants, powerful and crushing." In fact, Blenholt is pathetic, a diabetic who could not keep his hand out of the sweets jar, which led to a premature death. Max, who is one of Fuchs's most formidable creations, contains enough aspiration to lift himself out of Williamsburg, but he has the worst of both worlds: Williamsburg's poverty of imagination and the scrambled priorities of Blenholt's universe. "A human being without money and influence," he cravenly thinks, "became ridiculous if he possessed only dignity instead."

But Max idolizes Blenholt, because he has no one else to look up to. Ruth chides him for thinking himself special enough to make his own way. His mother mourns that, in her son's case, God appears to have ignored the Yom Kippur prayer for not-too-clever children. Max's father—who ran from the weekly paycheck to the Yiddish theater but now wears a clown outfit and carries an advertisement sandwich board—is perhaps the greatest betrayer of all: "He had always recognized the sorrowful destiny in store for his son.… Pain he felt for Max because he knew it would take his son time and suffering to resign himself." But "it was doubtful whether he could have permitted himself to … reveal himself so nakedly to his son." Stranded in a conservative and insular environment, Mr. Balkan channels the values that his surroundings sanction, and represses the rest. And so his son vacillates between coarse ambition and crushing self-doubt. His back-and-forth with Ruth and his family is as larky as farce—one perceptive critic called the novel a comedy of manners—but, in its own way, their discouragement is as disheartening as the iconic violence of Albert Schearl, the Old World father of Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep*.

Max's downfall—as with Cohen in the first novel, a startlingly harsh humiliation—begins at the Blenholt funeral. After Blenholt's goons threaten an elderly woman attempting to drive through the funeral procession, Max, fighting down feelings of meekness, attempts to mediate, only to be brushed aside. At the funeral itself, the shopkeepers who had been milked by Blenholt interrupt the oration, starting a mêlée that Max again unsuccessfully tries to resolve. This time he is viciously trampled, mainly because he isn't noticed. But at home he learns that an onion company has called about his idea to bottle onion juice. (His other brainstorms include a telephone service for movie showtimes, seat wrappers for public toilets, and canned orange juice—all of them visionary.) Again flush with enthusiasm, Max rushes to the meeting, only to learn that the company has been bottling onion juice for years, but why don't you take this bag of onions as thanks for the effort.

Heartbroken, Max gives in to a family proposal to go in on a delicatessen. His own father writes his obituary: "Max would never be the same again.… His son would grow old and, aging, die, but actually Max was dead already for now he would live for bread alone." And then Fuchs drives in the nail, with his final, diminishing line: "But all the same the evening sun that day went down on time."

If, in *Homage to Blenholt*, Williamsburg was dingier, the parents more unreliable, and youthful aspiration even less likely to redeem, *Low Company* is nothing less than a kind of dystopia. Fuchs has moved the action to the invented Brooklyn waterfront neighborhood of Neptune Beach, though, as one critic has shrewdly observed, here "no one ever looks at the ocean." The characters—soda shop owner Louis Spitzbergen and a variety of employees and hangers-on—have so internalized the ghetto mentality that nobody is any longer a flight risk. Their Neptune Beach is mostly in the mind, though the physical environment is as grim as its predecessors: "Everything in Neptune Beach was sand. It was a misery. No matter how hard the street cleaners worked, shoveling the sand in mounds along the gutters, more blew in from the beach. On a rainy day you walked in black gritty mud. Nothing was solid, neither the pavements nor the foundations of the buildings." The place is crushingly sterile.

Fuchs wants to show us what happens when the restraints—of income and of geography—lift, but without a concomitant rise in compassion. The grasping gets savage. The stingiest is Spitzbergen, who "always took great relish in operating the cash register whenever he could." Though wealthy, he is comfortable only when he imagines himself on the brink of financial disaster. The soda shop does well enough, but Spitz gets the bulk of his income from renting out several Neptune properties to a local heavy named Shubunka for use as brothels. Shubunka is hideous—"a huge face, his jaws like slabs of meat … lumpy nose, and gross lips … his face on his short thick neck … looking unnatural, like nothing human." Like Spitzbergen, he won't spare five dollars for a desperate horse-racing gambler and soda-shop regular named Karty, whose in-laws are pursuing him for $1,300 he has stolen to finance his betting.

But Shubunka is about to have a comeuppance: a newly arrived, nameless syndicate is running him out of business. Shubunka turns abject and self-pitying, but Spitzbergen is heartless: where is his rent money?! Shubunka assures him that he will have it no matter his troubles, but Spitzbergen can think to express only skepticism. "The boys at Ann's [soda shop] … have no room in their hearts for another," Shubunka laments to a neighborhood shopkeeper named Lurie. When the syndicate catches up with Shubunka, Lurie is there, watching transfixed as the gangster boys rough up the pimp. Shubunka's pleas to the thugs—"the fat man's frenzied outburst, the raw pleadings, the slobbering tears, a thorough exposure of a man's innermost emotions, repulsively naked and quivering"—elicit only disgust from Lurie. Shubunka's comedown—at last, the coming to pass of that ruin so feared by Spitzbergen—is a kind of relief, and frees the man to wallow in self-pity. But also to bare his need for another: at least Lurie was there to witness the beating, Shubunka thinks, at least I was not alone. Neptune's posturing is the desperate self-inflation of the frightened, reeling from the terror of life in the absence of brotherly love. Until Shubunka's outburst, though, no one is willing to admit it.

Shubunka never quite transcends his self-love, but Lurie, who has been looking to marriage to take him away from the grimness of Neptune, learns a lesson: "Feeling with pity [Shubunka's] complete wretchedness, Lurie knew now that it had been insensible and inhuman for him, too, simply to hate Neptune.… He understood how their evil appeared in their impoverished dingy lives.… It was not enough to call them low and pass on."

This is as close as Fuchs comes to redemption. The thugs continue after Shubunka, the in-laws after Karty. In desperation, the gambler sinks a wrench into Spitzbergen's face. The next morning, the rain breaks, the crowds return, and the shopkeepers of Neptune Beach have

TOMASZ WALENTA

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no time to dwell on the news of Spitzbergen's death: "It was too bad … but after all, business was business."

Summer in Williamsburg was published in the same year as Roth's *Call It Sleep*, another psychological—if more obviously imaginative and phantasmagoric—novel of life in the tenements. Both books, equally out of place in the early Depression years of politically compelled literature, were ignored. And both were re-issued in the 1960s, though this time only Fuchs would fail to gain wide notice. By then, he was contributor to a dozen noirish screenplays and an Oscar winner, for the James Cagney–Doris Day musical *Love Me or Leave Me*. In 1937, disheartened by the poor sales of his novels, he had "decided to become rich," breaking up a fourth novel into stories and making successful sales to *The New Yorker*, *Collier's*, and *The Saturday Evening Post*. Soon he was invited to Hollywood to turn one of them into a screenplay. And he more or less never looked back, committing the double sin of managing to leave the place that could never be left and finding contentment in the place where no self-respecting East Coast littérateur was supposed to remain. Surely Fuchs's reputation faltered because some of those littérateurs—who valued their talents much more seriously than Fuchs seems to have cherished his own—never forgave him his flight, and because he mostly stopped writing fiction. But more than anything, it was his own willingness to subordinate the appeal of his art to the idea of his stories.

Fuchs was a master. He had Pasternak's wonder at youth's encounter with the wider world, and Chekhov's nose for thwarted desire, and Turgenev's generosity to the barbarians of the new world order. (Though his truest literary *yichus* is Dovid Bergelson, Yiddish literature's first modernist and its premier chronicler of the decline of the Russian shtetls. A little older than Fuchs, he too saw only ruins, his characters ensconced in a perpetual fog of uncertainty.) But Fuchs was so truthful a portraitist of Williamsburg's lassitude that his novels come to nothing. There are no revelations in these revelation stories. Almost no one is emotionally transformed. Nobody learns anything.

Fuchs's fiction is, essentially, antidramatic. Such viciously comprehensive fatalism is hard to take, even when leavened by lovely writing; flawless character draftsmanship, mise-en-scène, and dialogue; and a precocious wisdom more befitting an old and lonely heart. It virtually turns the writer into an accomplice, his despair into sanguinity, his non-judgmental innocence an abdication not unlike the unanswering God whom Fuchs implicitly indicts. The reader wishes that Fuchs had at least showed his characters a brighter way, even if all of them failed to find it. But Fuchs, who wrote disapprovingly that "all authors knew everything because they were like God," refuses the crown. Like Philip Hayman, he cannot imagine life beyond the neighborhood walls. He, too, will make do with a cigarette and a window.

But his own life proved that one could "pass on," indeed. And as Sam Tanenhaus perceptively noted in a review of the Hollywood writings, he *had* to leave: "Fuchs was just enough older [than the next generation of Jewish-American writers] to feel hemmed in by Depression exigencies and to fear lifelong entrapment in the immigrant ghetto." So it was the ghetto's compulsions, not a sense of liberation, that sent him out West. Is a man compelled by freedom really free? Perhaps Fuchs sacrificed more than his art to make his literary point. ◆

Gary J. Bass
EVERYBODY EVERYWHERE

INVENTING HUMAN RIGHTS: A HISTORY
By Lynn Hunt
(W.W. Norton, 272 pp., $25.95)

I.

When Hitler came to devour Czechoslovakia, Neville Chamberlain shrugged it off as just a "quarrel in a faraway country between people of whom we know nothing." It was a notorious phrase, but not a careless one. After all, Chamberlain, while himself genuinely knowing little about Czechoslovakia, was a shrewd politician who had become prime minister not least for his skill in aiming his words at British public opinion. Chamberlain must have thought that these words would sell Britons on appeasement: that the remoteness and the obscurity of the Czechs would make it morally and politically acceptable to sacrifice them to Germany. This was the language of moral unconcern, Chamberlain's deliberate attempt to make the fate of the Czechs a matter of indifference to his own people.

Whose lives matter to us? In principle, for the most austere liberals, there is no justification for preferring one human life over another one. "Because a … community widely prevails among the Earth's peoples," Kant remarked, "a transgression of rights in *one* place in the world is felt *everywhere*." John Rawls argued that we should choose society's main rules as if we did not even know which family or ethnic group we belong to. To a pure liberal, if people are dying in a quarrel in a faraway country between people of whom we know nothing, all that matters is that people are dying.

But the politics of this moral duty do not work that way. In real life, our ethical universe radiates outward from ourselves. Our own miseries are our first and foremost concern, even when they are relatively trivial. "If he were to lose his little finger to-morrow, he would not sleep to-night," Adam Smith wrote in *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. "But, provided he never saw them, he will snore with the most profound security over the ruin of a hundred millions of his brethren, and the destruction of that immense multitude seems plainly an object less interesting to him, than this paltry misfortune of his own." Virginia Woolf echoed this nasty thought with verve in *Mrs. Dalloway*, in which her sweetly dithering title character thinks this: "And people would say, 'Clarissa Dalloway is spoilt.' She cared much more for her roses than for the Armenians. Hunted out of existence, maimed, frozen, the victims of cruelty and injustice (she had heard Richard say so over and over again)—no, she could feel nothing for the Albanians, or was it the Armenians? but she loved her roses." We all love our roses. And most of us love them a little guiltily, insofar as we recognize the narrowness of this emotional horizon. This guilt, or discomfort, is a mark of moral progress. At least Clarissa Dalloway feels bad that she doesn't feel bad.

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Most of us are devoted to our families and our friends more than to anybody else or to humanity at large. There is ethical dignity in this specificity, of course. But it can turn ugly. During the busing crisis in Boston, mothers in Southie rallied against desegregation for the sake of their children: the concern for immediate family was not attended by any larger sense of community with fellow Bostonians and Americans whose skin happened to be a different color. And beyond our immediate circle, we carry loyalties to our town, our region, our co-religionists, our class, our nation, our country—to the larger classes and sets to which we belong. Some solidarities go very big and very far: pan-Slavism, pan-Arabism, irredentist national movements. For Tolstoy, the privileged human unit was the entirety of the Christian world: "there … cannot be any reason for dissension between Christian nations." (Historically speaking, this was a spectacular error.) And Herzen went one better: "after Christianity [came] the belief in civilization, in humanity."

When one's loyalties extend to all of humanity, one has reached the climax, and perhaps the limits, of moral sympathy. Humanity, after all, is as much an abstraction as a reality. How concrete must ethical obligations be? Is a species too vast to be a meaningful moral object? Or is it the other way around: are our commitments in the particular premised on the possibility of universalism? These are also political questions, of course. The greatest dividing lines in today's world are certainly the ones on the map: I mean state borders. Orwell, trying to understand why Germans were bombing him in World War II, argued, "One cannot see the modern world as it is unless one recognizes the overwhelming strength of patriotism, national loyalty." Patriotism—loyalty to the state—is the doctrine that on this side of the line, you should care intensely, and on that side, you should not at all.

Put that way, it sounds awfully unattractive. But patriotism can be one of the moral sentiments; patriotism is what fueled Churchill's righteous defense against the Nazis. Yet patriotism is also what underpinned Chamberlain's argument against England's interest in Czechoslovakia. The advocates of patriotism tend to lean hard on the unfamiliarity of foreigners. "The ordinary Englishman carries in his mind a generalized picture of the behaviour, daily life, thoughts and interests of other Englishmen, whereas he has no such picture at all of the Greek or the Lithuanian," wrote E.H. Carr, the British historian, in *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, which stands as a realist brief for appeasement. "Moreover, the vividness of his picture of 'foreigners' will commonly vary in relation to geographical, racial and linguistic proximity, so that the ordinary Englishman will be likely to feel that he has something, however slight, in common with the German or the Australian and nothing at all in common with the Chinese or the Turk."

Governments, at least, have long seen the world that way. In 1850, Palmerston sent a British squadron to Greece after anti-Semitic rioters burned the house of Don Pacifico, a British Jew living in Athens. During the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, America and many European countries dispatched troops to safeguard their citizens (and their imperialistic claims) in China. In 1965, Lyndon Johnson publicly justified sending the Marines to the Dominican Republic in order to evacuate American citizens, and in 1975 the White House argued that it was entitled to use force to free the *Mayaguez*, an American merchant ship seized by Cambodia. In 1976, Israel reached as far as Entebbe in Uganda to free Israelis and Jews from Palestinian hijackers. And in 1980, much less effectively, the Carter administration launched a botched raid to try to free American embassy personnel being held hostage in Iran.

This emphasis on a narrow construction of national morality, the sort of patriotism that is deployed against larger and distant obligations, is likely to increase as things in Iraq go from horrific to worse. In the current Scowcroftian moment, as the Bush administration's disastrous adventure in Iraq threatens to discredit any future projects of nation-building and democratization, Americans are likely to place more emphasis on looking out for fellow Americans, the rest of the world be damned. But the contemporary revival of the patriotic-realist tradition will run up against an obstacle—one of the primary moral accomplishments of our time. I refer to the idea, and the statecraft, of human rights.

II.

What exactly are human rights? Are they a criminal "egoism" that saps the strength of society overall, as Marx wrote? Are they "nonsense upon stilts," as Bentham witheringly called natural rights? (In his dealings with slavery and the suffering Greeks in the 1820s, Bentham actually showed that he took the idea of human rights much more seriously than that.)

STRATEGIC SELECTION

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Is believing in rights, as Alasdair MacIntyre has claimed, like believing in witches and unicorns?

No doubt the definition of rights, and certainly the language of it, is slippery and easily exploited. The precise content of a right is always up for debate, as are the people who get to hold them. (Under the English Bill of Rights, Protestants were allowed to carry arms sufficient to defend themselves.) Rights are supposed to exist in all times and all places: the enslavement of the Spartan helots and apartheid are what we would call human rights violations. But, as Lynn Hunt's splendid new book demonstrates, rights as a political program came along relatively late in the day.

Hunt has written a provocative and engaging history of the political impact of human rights, mostly in the eighteenth century. The language of rights grew up in the early and high Middle Ages, and came of age with political theorists from Grotius to Locke. This is roughly the point where Hunt begins. In the late eighteenth century, for the first time, doctrines of human rights gained wide acceptance. In America, they took on political form in the Declaration of Independence in 1776; in France, in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen in 1789. These went a step beyond the English Bill of Rights in 1689, which was rooted in the particulars of English law and history, rather than universal principles that applied to all men—every single member of the human race.

Above all, rights themselves are supposed to be beyond debate. Nothing beats a right. After the middle of the eighteenth century, Americans and (somewhat more grudgingly) Britons increasingly talked about rights as universal, not particular to a given country. When the Americans and French solemnly declared, in 1776 and 1789, that their undeniable rights had been violated, they were trying to render uncontroversial a view of government that was in fact fiercely contested: that the point of government was to secure these rights of man.

Hunt grasps the novelty, and the preciousness, of this intellectual transformation. Although she clearly believes in moral progress even unto her own day, she does not allow herself the smug luxury of assuming the superiority of the current age. She properly condemns Jefferson for owning slaves, but she insists that the really important point is that the flawed Jefferson and his flawed contemporaries nonetheless rose far above the mores of their day: "How did these men, living in societies built on slavery, subordination, and seemingly natural subservience, ever come to imagine men not at all like them and, in some cases, women too, as equals?"

Hunt dwells on the shock of the violation of rights. One does not have a philosophical reaction to the photographs from Abu Ghraib, even if one's principles are offended; one first reacts viscerally. Hunt argues that "we are most certain that a human right is at issue when we feel horrified by its violation." As she notes, in the most famous articulation of the human rights ideal, Thomas Jefferson wrote only that the truth of rights is self-evident. But for rights really to be self-evident implies a widespread emotional recoil from their violation. Hunt is not troubled that Jefferson ducked the issue of rationally deriving rights from first principles. She thinks that the idea of human rights comes not from reason but from experience. What really counts, Hunt argues, is not so much the abstractions of equality and universality, but "the newfound power of empathy": the sense that the suffering of others is like our own.

In our own time, this sense of empathy is nurtured by the mass media. For Hunt, that mostly means pictures in public exhibitions and wildly popular novels. When you hear about torture, you imagine yourself in the position of the person being tortured. (We sometimes do this even in circumstances when it might not make moral sense, such as feeling pity for Saddam Hussein while watching footage of him at the gallows.) Many people will not react with empathy to depictions of suffering; some people will get desensitized or will actually thrill to the cruelty. But if the spectacle of suffering does not make empathy inevitable, it certainly makes it possible. As Hunt writes, "New kinds of reading (and viewing and listening) created new individual experiences (empathy), which in turn made possible new social and political concepts (human rights)."

Hunt describes readers howling with emotion as they read Rousseau's epistolary novel *Julie, or the New Héloïse*. The historical significance of this literary hysteria, she argues, was that it showed readers identifying with characters very different from themselves. In an era of increasingly widespread literacy, novels were a kind of lesson in emotional and moral expansiveness. The point that literature has been a cause of empathy is not a new one, but it is still a good one. In *Julie*, or in Samuel Richardson's titanic *Clarissa*, the story unfolded through letters written by the characters, which allowed readers to discover the characters' innermost thoughts without any interference from a narrator. (Writers in our time now make epistolary fiction out of e-mails.) Men identified directly with Rousseau's and Richardson's emphatically female heroines—although, a bit problematically for Hunt's argument, it took well over a century before anyone named Julie or Clarissa experienced anything like political emancipation. Class differences were imaginatively transcended as effectively as gender differences. And this closing of the distance between people represented, in Hunt's view, a huge leap of the moral imagination—the sort of leap without which the idea of human rights would not have been possible.

Torture is Hunt's most powerful example. With a White House that manifestly believes in torture as an instrument of national security policy, it is not just antiquarian to read that back in the eighteenth century people believed that torture could make the body speak truths even when the mind was unwilling. Judicially supervised torture was commonplace in France well into the eighteenth century, and much of Europe's sixteenth- and seventeenth-century criminal jurisprudence was dedicated to the codification of particular forms of torture. Prussia, of all places, led the way in abolishing judicial torture in 1754. From the 1760s, activists fought back against torture and the crueler forms of criminal punishment. French courts began to back away from torture as a way of extracting confessions.

Their champion was a young Italian aristocrat named Cesare Beccaria, who was moved to write his *Essay on Crimes and Punishments* by an empathetic horror at the public spectacle of torture. To the traditionalists in the legal establishment, of course, that was the whole point: punishment had to be horrible for it to produce a deterrent effect among the watching mobs. Clearly not everyone had the same reaction to watching torture as Beccaria; otherwise nobody would have shown up. (The slasher movies of our time profit mightily from Beccaria's error.) Benjamin Rush denounced public punishment for its attempt to block the public from empathizing with the sufferer. For Rush, it was crucial to realize that even convicts "possess souls and bodies composed of the same materials as those of our friends and relations."

Hunt argues that people gradually came to believe that their bodies belonged to themselves and not to the community, and thus could not be sacrificed in the name of public order (or religion).

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As Beccaria's treatise was translated into English, German, Polish, and Spanish, torture and public execution withered. In 1780, the French essayist Jacques-Pierre Brissot de Warville wrote that the "sacred rights that man holds from nature, which society violates so often with its judicial apparatus, still require the suppression of a portion of our mutilating punishments and the softening of those which we must preserve." Brissot would go on to found France's first anti-slavery society. Hunt also quotes Montesquieu, in *The Spirit of the Laws*, suggesting that whereas torture might work for despotic governments, and ancient Greece and Rome certainly had slaves, "I hear the voice of nature crying out against me." By the 1780s, the absolute end of torture was a key tenet of human rights.

The end of torture was one of the signature (and, if you consider the body count of the new republic, one of the most hypocritical) achievements of the French Revolution. Just six weeks after the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen in 1789, France's deputies completely abolished judicial torture. King Louis XVI had discontinued the use of torture to get guilty confessions, but had only provisionally abolished it for the purpose of finding out the names of accomplices—what French law, with chilling euphemism, called the "preliminary question." Alberto Gonzales would have gone far at the court of Louis XVI.

III.

For the supporters of the old European order, the new language of rights had to be discredited. Edmund Burke, who preferred to base government on deep-seated traditions, was the most withering critic. As he wrote in *Reflections on the Revolution in France*: "Troops again—Massacre, torture, hanging! These are your rights of men! These are the fruits of metaphysic declarations wantonly made, and shamefully retracted!" But even if Burke recoiled at the political abuse of rights language, he strongly believed in universal moral norms. Burke's criticisms of the French Revolution should not be written off as dark reaction. He was right about what the Revolution quickly degenerated into; and so he provided an early warning that the pursuit of a perfect society can quickly descend into the persecution and the destruction of the imperfect human beings who stand in the way of the plan, like the Soviet kulaks. And Burke was also an early hero of anti-imperialism, in this way giving aid and comfort to those who believed in the rights of man. In 1788, attacking the corrupt colonial administrator Warren Hastings, Burke demanded equal decency in India as in any other place: "the laws of morality are the same every where, and … there is no action which would pass for an action of extortion, of peculation, of bribery and of oppression in England, that is not an act of extortion, of peculation, of bribery and of oppression in Europe, Asia, Africa, and all the world over." There is not a word in that magnificent declaration that would trouble a liberal rights advocate.

TOMASZ WALENTA

Still, as Hunt shows, those French metaphysic declarations were not so easily retracted. The granting of rights really was a slippery slope. Once one group was included, others followed, in what Hunt calls the "bulldozer force of the revolutionary logic of rights." In France after the Revolution, once the deputies debated granting rights to Protestants, it was hard not to grant them also to Jews. So even in a Catholic country, Protestants got their political rights in 1789, and Jews got them in 1791. Next, as Hunt mordantly notes, "some, but not all, free black men won political rights on May 15, 1791, only to lose them on September 24 and then have them reinstated and applied more generally on April 4, 1792." Even executioners and actors, who had previously been excluded from holding public office, were allowed full participation in the French political system. And in 1794 France abolished slavery in its colonies (only to reinstate it under Napoleon).

The pattern of expansion was much the same in other countries. As Hunt puts it, "The virtue of beginning with the general became apparent once the specific came into question." That logic helped to engender a gradual spread of freedom, despite heated controversy at every step. In Britain, Catholics were allowed into Parliament after 1829, and Jews after 1848. In 1807, fully two hundred years ago, Britain got rid of the slave trade, and in 1833 it decided to abolish slavery in British colonies. In the new United States, where at first in many states only Protestants could hold political office, the process went state by state, but usually in pretty much the same sequence. In Massachusetts, all Christians were allowed to hold public office in 1780, and then, in 1833, the right was expanded to include people of any religion. The great and disgraceful lag was in the abolition of the most monstrous American violation of human rights, slavery itself. The Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 came almost seven decades after France first tried to abolish slavery. Even Russia beat America to this high ground when Alexander II freed the serfs in 1861.

Women's rights lagged in both Europe and America, trapped in what Hunt nicely calls "the obscuring fog of habit." But Hunt argues that women, while downtrodden by today's standards, "were not a persecuted minority." Unlike blacks or Jews, women could not be expelled outright from society. Women in the eighteenth century did have some civil rights, although not as many as men. In 1791, a French woman playwright named Olympe de Gouges issued a Declaration of the Rights of Woman, extending the language of the famous Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen. "Woman is born free and remains equal to man in rights," she wrote. She was guillotined. In Britain, in 1792, Mary Wollstonecraft rather more safely issued her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*.

Hunt's exemplary book treats mostly the domestic roots of human rights. She does not particularly address herself to the now-pressing problems of a foreign policy based on human rights. Should the liberal republics be merely exemplars of human rights, passively inspiring other societies to follow, or should they more actively seek to spread liberty and defend human rights? If rights are universal, there will presumably be a strong temptation to protect them even in other countries. Thus John Stuart Mill cheered at British foreign policy conducted "rather in the service of others than of itself,—to mediate in the quarrels which break out between foreign States, to arrest obstinate civil wars, to reconcile belligerents, to intercede for mild treatment of the vanquished, or, finally, to procure the abandonment of some national crime and scandal to humanity, such as the slave-trade." This was the interventionist language of "crimes against humanity," almost a century before Nuremberg.

Hunt is wonderful at showing how the American and French declarations reinforced each other, and at demonstrating the slow spread of human rights ideas across borders. Between 1776 and 1783, there were nine different French translations of the Declaration of Independence. French reformers were thrilled by the American example. In revolution-

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ary France as in revolutionary America before it, Hunt argues, human rights arguments allowed for a decisive break with past government and a radically new vision of legitimate governance. And after those two great declarations and their concomitant upheavals, the language of human rights swept into Western consciousness. Today, it spans the globe.

Hunt also tracks the effects of imitation from one country to another, as when French abolitionists in 1788 created an activist group modeled on the British Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. French rhetoric about rights was used by Haitian abolitionists. After a slave revolt in Saint Domingue (present-day Haiti), France abolished slavery in all its colonies in 1794. Toussaint-Louverture, an ex-slave who led the revolt, thundered, "I want Liberty and Equality to reign in Saint Domingue." French commissioners on the island started an emancipation decree with Article 1 of France's own Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen: "Men are born and live free and equal in rights."

Although Hunt's book is not really about the deliberate export of human rights, her examples are telling. The prime case is France in its wars after the Revolution. This meant the temporary abolition of torture in Switzerland and Spain, which fell apart after Napoleon was toppled, and the equally transient emancipation of Jews in small German and Italian states. The rights of man followed the French flag, in advance and in retreat. The few lasting successes—such as Jewish rights in Holland—were tainted by the entanglement of human rights with military aggression.

This old link between rights and troops reverberates to this day. The intentional spread of human rights has long been tarred as imperialism. Many times it *is* imperialism. But more often than is remembered, it is not. Once liberals have secured rights at home, there is a logic for not stopping there. Are not human rights by definition universal? Why not act universally and encourage the spread of human rights to all of humanity? In a pamphlet titled "Emancipate Your Colonies!" addressed to France in 1793, Bentham asked: "You choose your own government, why are not other people to choose theirs? Do you seriously mean to govern the world, and do you call that *liberty*? What is become of the rights of men? Are you the only men who have rights?"

One critical example is the slave trade. As Hunt relates, Napoleon Bonaparte brought slavery back to the French empire in 1802 and sent warships to brutally subdue rebellious blacks in the Caribbean colonies, failing only in Saint Domingue. But immediately after Waterloo, Britain demanded an end to France's slave trade. In July 1815, Lord Castlereagh, the conservative British foreign secretary, proudly informed his prime minister that the restored Bourbon monarchy had declared "the Slave Trade for ever abolished throughout the Dominions of France." (It would actually take until 1848 to put an end to the slave trade.) Bentham furiously told the president of Haiti that he would like to see Haitian ships "capturing the slave-trading ships" and then consigning the slavers "to the like slavery in your Island." The master of the slave ships, Bentham suggested, should be permanently branded as "a man so highly distinguished in barbarity" with "an indelible mark upon him"—such as cutting off "one of his lips."

In 1817, Britain turned its attentions to the Spanish empire, demanding an end to the slave trade, and also rattled its sabers against the slave trade in Cuba, Zanzibar, Iran, and Texas. This was anything but cheap talk. All told, as the political scientists Chaim Kaufmann and Robert Pape have reckoned, Britain lost something like five thousand troops in anti-slavery missions, soured its relations with America and France, and badly damaged its economy by undermining its own sugar industry. And as David Brion Davis has observed, in words that have an oddly familiar sound to debates today about the cost of spreading human rights, "Britain's fixation on the slave trade often worked against British interests, damaging or straining relations with Muslim leaders in an era of Islamic insurgency and nationalistic discontent." Here Britain hurt its own empire for the sake of humanity.

Hunt fast-forwards in two dozen pages from the end of the Napoleonic Wars to the aftermath of World War II. This is already an ambitious book about the eighteenth century, so it is no criticism to note that she might have been a little more reassured by some of the more hopeful moments of the nineteenth century. The nineteenth century is painted here in shades from dark to pitch. Hunt argues that nationalism became the framework for establishing rights after 1815, when the Napoleonic Wars came to an end with France's final defeat at Waterloo. In the post-Napoleonic world, nationalist movements spread across Europe and Latin America, to the horror of the established empires. Hunt rightly shows how hard it was to reconcile collectivist nationalism and individualist liberalism. The actual populations of Europe were so mixed that it was impossible, as Woodrow Wilson imagined, to draw lines that would hermetically partition ethnic groups from one another. As the century wore on, nationalists turned xenophobic and often simply racist.

But there were more hopeful moments, too. When the Greeks rose up against Ottoman rule, they were helped by the activists of the London Greek Committee, including Bentham and Byron, who died fighting for a free Greece; this pressure pushed the British government to what was arguably the world's first humanitarian intervention, sinking much of the Ottoman navy in 1827 to secure present-day independent Greece. British and French liberals rallied for the cause of Poles crushed by Russia in 1831 and again in 1863, and Hungarians crushed by Austria in 1848. Outraged at a crackdown on political prisoners in Naples in the 1850s, Britain broke off diplomatic relations and then tried a daring covert rescue plan to send a fast steamship to rescue the prisoners. (The ship sank.) In 1860, French troops and British ships intervened in Syria after major massacres there, and, just as impressive, the diplomats managed to get France to withdraw in 1861. In 1876, after a massacre in the remote town of Batak in Bulgaria, Britons from Queen Victoria on down were collectively horrified, and William Ewart Gladstone came roaring out of retirement to campaign against the "Bulgarian horrors." The Tory prime minister Benjamin Disraeli, who drew up plans for a military intervention in Bulgaria, never recovered, and was hounded from office by Gladstone in the next elections. As Gladstone thundered on the campaign trail, "mutual love is not limited by the shores of this island, is not limited by the boundaries of Christian civilization; that it passes over the whole surface of the earth, and embraces the meanest along with the greatest in its unmeasured scope."

In fact, something similar to Hunt's own argument could be applied nicely to the nineteenth century. As Hunt notes, new forms of media created what Benedict Anderson calls an "imagined community." What links these distant and unconnected persons, Anderson argues, is, at least at first, print capitalism. In 1791, Burke worried that French revolutionary nationalism was spreading "chiefly by newspaper circulations, infinitely more efficacious and exten-

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sive than ever they were." He warned, "Let us only suffer any person to tell us his story, morning and evening, but for one twelvemonth, and he will become our master."

The same forces of modernity that first forged a sense of common British political identity between impoverished Welsh villagers and London aristocrats, or between French citizens in metropolitan Paris and the slowly integrating Lorraine and Savoy, could also create a weaker but still politically significant sense of solidarity with foreigners facing massacre. Just as the growth of national consciousness relies on knowledge about the lives of other members of the national community near or far, the growth of humanitarian concern for foreigners relies on knowledge about the lives of foreigners. Although Hunt rightly recalls the imperialist bigotry of the period, the parallel marches of political liberalization and mass-media technology sometimes resulted in a greater concern for more and more people unlike one's own. In the nineteenth century, this was the product of telegraphs and newspapers and books, and today includes radio, television, satellites, and computer networks—all the distance-shrinking devices.

Press freedom helped sweep away the absolutism of the sixteenth century. By the 1850s, various taxation schemes on the press, left over from the Napoleonic Wars, were abolished: the Advertisement Duty in 1853, the Stamp Duty in 1855, and the Paper Duty in 1861. From the 1850s to the 1880s, the British mass press basked in an unprecedented age of freedom and influence. The limits to the expanding moral universe were the reach of the reporter and the run of the telegraph wire.

The rise of a free and enterprising press meant that the British government could not always pick and choose its foreign crises. In an earlier era, if there was an inconvenient massacre somewhere, only British diplomats would know about it, and they could sweep it under the rug if that was what realpolitik dictated. But no longer after the 1850s. Suddenly there was the danger that an industrious foreign correspondent would report news directly to the British public, no matter what the British government wanted its subjects to know. Newspaper reports of a massacre in Chios, Greece, in 1822 convulsed the British public; and in 1876 a *Daily News* scoop about the massacre in Bulgaria did it again. This was a quarrel in a faraway country of which British newspaper readers knew quite a bit.

That is why dictatorships work so hard to make sure that foreign correspondents cannot do their jobs. In Justice Robert H. Jackson's opening address at Nuremberg, he spoke of Buchenwald and Dachau but not of Auschwitz, because the eastern camps were in Soviet hands and thus not as accessible to British and American officials and reporters. In Algeria and Chechnya more recently, visiting reporters were potential targets, which helped to ensure that the outside world knew little of the staggering bloodshed there. North Korea imposes strict limits on foreign correspondents, preventing detailed reporting on the country's vast famine. And Robert Mugabe allows only a few foreign correspondents to operate in Zimbabwe.

You could read Hunt's superb history with a certain sense of satisfaction: liberalization and the mass media are flourishing beyond her eighteenth-century characters' wildest dreams. Human rights is not triumphant, to be sure; but the idea is holding its own. It is more and more a central element in foreign policy and international affairs and even military strategy. We may be living in a very cruel world, but there is a growing conscience, at least officially and culturally, about its cruelty. Yet there is one element of this era of human rights that is in retreat: print capitalism, and thus foreign press coverage. Print and capitalism are not getting along. Although American newspapers now field overseas reporters with a skill and a professionalism unknown to nineteenth-century hacks, Wall Street has decided that it hates newspaper stock. Under heavy pressure from investors, some of the country's best newspapers have decided to go local. Foreign bureaus are being closed by many important papers in many important places. When the suits decide to shut those bureaus, they fritter away a hard-won achievement of centuries. They are reversing the moral gains of modern empathy. Do they know this? I doubt it. But I doubt also that they would care. ◆

Chloë Schama
DUST AND LITERATURE

THE SAVAGE DETECTIVES
By Roberto Bolaño
Translated by Natasha Wimmer
(Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 577 pp., $27)

AMULET
By Roberto Bolaño
Translated by Chris Andrews
(New Directions, 184 pp., $21.95)

According to the formula commonly used to introduce foreign writers, it would be accurate to call the late Roberto Bolaño a Chilean writer. But since he lived most of his life outside Chile, in Mexico and in Spain, the description is not quite accurate. Bolaño objected to attempts to attach him to a homeland: Chilean writers thought of him as a Mexican writer, Mexican writers thought of him as a Chilean writer, his Spanish colleagues thought of him as something else entirely. "My only homeland," he said in the last interview before his death in 2003 at age fifty, "is my children."

For some time, Latin American writers have bristled at the literary characteristics fixed not only to their homelands but also to the entire region of Latin America. For these writers, the legacy of the "Boom" generation—the Latin American writers who introduced Spanish-language literature to a mass market in the 1960s and 1970s—was both a blessing and a curse. Gabriel García Márquez, Mario Vargas Llosa, Carlos Fuentes, and others paved the way to an English-speaking audience, but the path was narrow, and largely dependent on the writer's facility with the formulas of magical realism.

In 1996, a group of writers led by the Chilean writer Alberto Fuguet published a collection of short stories titled *McOndo*, an irreverent jab at the imaginary region of Macondo, where much of García Márquez's fiction takes place. "McOndo," Fuguet wrote in an introductory essay titled "I Am Not a Magical Realist!," is a world composed of "McDonald's, Macintoshes and condos," a more accurate portrait of his contemporary Chile than one populated by flying grandmothers. Another school with a similar purpose (although slightly different constituents), the self-named "crack" generation of Mexican writers, proclaimed defiantly that they would not write about revolution, houses of ghosts, or the border. Their name referred not to crack cocaine, but to the impending

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collapse of the tired tropes that held the "Boom" together.

Bolaño did not assume an explicit position in these sectarian wars, but he was an inspiration to the sects. The novelist and scholar Edmundo Paz Soldán has remarked that Bolaño became a legend among his contemporaries—younger than the "Boom" authors—even before he died. Fuguet claims that Bolaño's stories are like cathedrals to him. According to the novelist Francisco Goldman, Bolaño hovered "over many young Latin American writers … the way García Márquez must have over his generation and the following one." *The Savage Detectives*, which has just been published in English, and *Amulet*, the latest of Bolaño's short novels to be translated, help to explain the forces behind his inadvertent ascent to founding-father status of the post-"Boom" generation.

At first glance, Bolaño seems an unlikely candidate for such leadership. Although he steered clear of magical realism, his literature is not dissociated from themes that the new writers were anxious to avoid: violence, revolution, corruption. *By Night in Chile* (published in English in 2003) is a monologue delivered by a priest who doubles as Pinochet's tutor. *Distant Star* (2004) tells the story of a pilot who profits from Pinochet's coup. But how could Bolaño not incorporate history into his writing? Born in Santiago in 1953, he spent the first fifteen years of his life in various cities in Chile before leaving for Mexico in 1968. After leaving school at seventeen, he returned to Chile to work on behalf of Salvatore Allende. When Allende's government was overthrown, Bolaño was imprisoned for eight days and was released only because he recognized his jailers as former schoolmates. When he accepted the Rómolo Gallegos Prize for *The Savage Detectives*, he spoke of the effect of these events on his writing: "All that I have written is a love letter … to my generation, we who were born in the 1950s … and who gave what little we had, all that we had—our youth—to a cause that we believed [in]." Such a sentiment makes him an improbable spokesman for a generation of writers who wanted to shed the burden of writing about revolution. And in strictly literary terms, he was too idiosyncratic and original to be representative of anybody but himself.

But in other ways his salience makes sense. Bolaño was not uniquely attached to the experience of a single country, within or beyond Latin America. *The Savage Detectives* is narrated by people of all nationalities. *Amulet* is told by a Uruguayan woman living in Mexico. (Geographic boundaries never held much meaning for Bolaño. As a child, he refused to accept that Caracas was the capital of Venezuela and Bogotá the capital of Colombia. It was more logical, according to his poetic sensibility, the other way around: the "v" of "Venezuela" sounding like the "b" in Bogota, while the hard "c" in Caracas chimed with "Colombia." Bolaño has suggested that these mental machinations grew out of his dyslexia, but they seem to foreshadow an easy acceptance of a transnational identity later in life.)

Bolaño was also sharply critical of several "Boom" authors, famously declaring that magical realism stinks. He reserved admiration only for Julio Cortázar, to whom he has been compared. As a young poet in Mexico he started a movement, *infrarealismo*, to promote an alternative to the prevailing literary themes and styles. Neither *The Savage Detectives* nor *Amulet* shies away from the candid depiction of gritty reality, which was a central aim of *infrarealismo* (and of later movements). Most importantly, these novels show a way of writing about Latin America and Latin American history that is not constrained by the stylistic stereotypes associated with the region.

The Savage Detectives, a remarkable and demanding book, presents a Latin America that retains certain distinguishing characteristics (many taken from Bolaño's life), but in its emotional landscape it strikingly resembles the rest of the world. Its juxtaposition of stories from across the globe makes it clear just how similar those stories can be. The first of the novel's three sections, "Mexicans Lost in Mexico," is the most grounded in a specific time and place. Juan García Madero, a young law-school dropout, falls in with a group of writers, poets, and intellectuals who have formed a new literary movement dubbed "visceral realism." The leaders of this group, Arturo Belano and Ulises Lima, are thinly veiled stand-ins for the author and the poet Mario Santiago (a co-founder of *infrarealismo*). Madero, like many of the characters in this novel, is a literary street rat, a kid who would rather spend his last peso on a book than on a burrito.

The visceral realists introduce Madero to the literary underground of Mexico City, and before he understands what either is about he is spitting out references to Khlebnikov and indulging in bouts of wild sex. At the end of this section, Madero flees the city with Belano, Lima, and a prostitute named Lupe who is being pursued by her disgruntled pimp. Belano and Lima have an additional reason for leaving the city: they are searching for the obscure poet Cesárea Tinajero, who disappeared years before, having published only one poem. The combined purposes for the trip—one immediately pressing and one loftily intellectual—parallel the seemingly incongruous forces that motivate much of Bolaño's writing.

The second section of the novel, "The Savage Detectives," is composed of a series of first-person narratives that dramatically expand the geographic and thematic scope of the book. Madero's self-centered teenage musings give way to a variety of narratives. The dozens of narrators—an inhabitant of an insane asylum, a single mother who writes poetry by night, a bar owner who divines winning lottery numbers, an editor with a penchant for duels—have some connection to Belano or Lima, but this is the only thing that unites them. Some return frequently, others appear only once or twice. Each person narrates at least a page, but no more than thirty, building a patchwork story that sketches Belano and Lima's trajectories after they leave Mexico City.

The third section, "The Sonora Desert," picks up where the first section leaves off. Belano and Lima gather clues about the vanished poet as the pimp and his thugs

R. S. Thomas

To see heaven as a length of seashore
And months of bird watching. To stalk the fells
Like a stork trying to get aloft.
To hear wind and river both as voices
And the word Christ like a skin of ice
Crackling under shrill December stars.
One day a week to lift the host
And fortified wine. To have water the rest,
And mutton, cold mutton, mutton stew,
A kipper on Friday, and the desk for poems
And a space of lamplight for the eyes,
Wife and child, like farmers in the combes,
Elsewhere with their own preoccupations,
One God for the drowsy villagers
In the matte black pews, and another,
True God, for the squealing curlew
And the red kite on her found nest.

MARK JARMAN

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carry on their hunt. Madero's personal journey continues as the chase heats up. Like all coming-of-age stories, Madero's relies on the particularities of time and place to make the universal experience of adolescence somehow unique. But the long (almost four-hundred-page) interlude of the second section disrupts the traditional inward-looking framework of the coming-of-age tale. Rather than emphasizing the singular importance of Madero's experience in Mexico, this section chronicles the aging of his fellow travelers, the way their lives—begun in a certain time and place—ripple across decades and continents.

Expanding the sweep of his novel by multiplying perspectives, Bolaño draws attention to the human experiences that transcend the particularities of age or location. Here, for example, is a scene that demonstrates this skill:

> He whispered that he loved me, that he would never be able to forget me. Then he got up (twenty seconds after he'd spoken, at most) and slapped my face. The sound echoed through the house. We were on the first floor, but I heard the sound of his hand (when his palm left my cheek) rise up the stairs and enter each of the rooms on the second floor, dropping down through the climbing vines and rolling like glass marbles in the yard.

The narrator, a girlfriend of Belano's, responds to the attack by launching her own.

> Afterward I sat on the floor, still crying. When I looked up Arturo was beside me. His nose was bleeding, I remember, a little thread of blood running down to his upper lip and from there to the corner of his mouth and down to his chin. You hurt me, he said. This hurts. I looked at him and blinked several times. This hurts, he said, and he sighed. And what do you think you did to me? I said.... He asked me whether I'd calmed down. I'll never be calm around you, I said.

The narrator of this scene is little more than a peripheral character before this episode, and the interaction has nothing to do with Madero, the ostensible "hero" at the start of the novel. Yet its emotional resonance extends beyond these few pages. Its potency derives from its vivid evocation of an emotion, not a place or a specific set of characters. The scene could take place anywhere in the world without losing its force, and that may be why Latin American writers admire it.

Belano/Bolaño also appears in *Amulet*, which is narrated by a minor character from the second section of *The Savage Detectives*. The narrator, Auxilio Lacoutre, calls herself the "mother of Mexican Poetry" and is part secretary, part nurse, part maid, and part lover to the poets and would-be poets who enter her orbit. "Life drew me into other stories," she says, including Belano's. Like Bolaño, Belano goes to Chile and returns a changed person; he now falls into "the category of those who have seen death at close range," giving him a certain influence and prestige "in the eyes of those desperate Latin American kids." Auxilio stands apart, haunted by an image of a "multitude of young people, an interminable legion of young people on the march to somewhere ... [whose] destinies were not oriented by a common idea." But she withholds condemnation. She emphasizes, in words that echo Bolaño's acceptance speech for the Rómolo Gallegos Prize, their selflessness and bravery, and pays them tribute. "[H]ow beautiful they were, such beauty, although they were marching deathward, shoulder to shoulder.... The only thing I could do was to stand up, trembling, and listen to their song, go on listening to their song right up to the last breath, because, although they were swallowed by the abyss, the song remained in the air of the valley, in the mist of the valley rising toward the mountainsides and the crags as evening drew on."

This validation for the mistakes of youth must also contribute to the reverence for Bolaño among young writers. He preserves the songs produced by ill-formed, angry, or just silly ideologies, and recognizes the underlying goodness of their intentions. Auxilio and Belano are faced with a draining of purpose from their actions when they rescue a sick, weak prostitute and set him up with a job, only to encounter him later, strung out from sniffing glue and close to death. But they concur that it does not matter that the prostitute was going to die. "Our hidden purpose," Auxilio says, "had been to stop him from being killed." An ultimately futile campaign is not without importance, in Bolaño's world. A poet may not be able to stop Pinochet, but he can testify to the attempt.

Bolaño is not just interested in vindicating the motives behind political or social activity; the motives behind literary activity are as often the object of his inquiry. As Belano and Lima hunt down Cesárea Tinajero in the desert, it becomes increasingly clear that the importance they have ascribed to their quest is misguided. Her single poem was almost comically insignificant, but still the questers do not become objects of scorn. No wonder young Latin American writers, eager to start movements of their own and stamp them with clever coinages, appreciate Bolaño; he gives them permission to make their mistakes and provides an eloquent example of how to reflect upon their blunders.

If the sprawling *Savage Detectives* is about anything, it is about people who love literature and the often admirable forces that move them. Yet the slope from veneration to ridicule is slippery, and Bolaño moves between adulation and sarcasm with stealth, even when referring to his own creations. "The whole visceral realism thing was a love letter, the demented strutting of a dumb bird in the moonlight, something essentially cheap and meaningless," says one character. Visceral realism, says another, "was a perfect match for my inner self and my sense of reality." The condemnation sounds more convincing than the praise. But if Bolaño is harsh at times, the sheer multitude of voices and opinions expressed in *The Savage Detectives* suggest that he is also a tolerant man, forgiving of everybody, and this perhaps limits his impact. With his love letters and paeans to pure intentions, Bolaño seems to shrug off the moral and political consequences of some of the ideas and emotions that he depicts. This makes his writing occasionally weightless, all its aspirations to gravity notwithstanding.

Bolaño is not an easy writer, and I wonder if he will find many American readers, who still crave water for chocolate. His flavor is distinctly different: sometimes serious, sometime playful, and not always clear about which is which. This mild promiscuity of manner was reflected in the last interview he gave before his death (published in the Mexican edition of *Playboy*), in which he was asked what he thought of critics who pegged him as the Latin American writer with the greatest future. He responded that it must be a joke. Perhaps humility, or his sense of his own mortality, prompted him to remark: "I am the Latin American writer with the least future." When he was asked for his idea of paradise in the same interview, he answered slyly that it would be like Venice, "a place you enjoy and you know is not going to last." The best things, according to Bolaño, never last. As one of his characters says, "Dust and literature have always gone hand in hand." ◆

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Irish Spring

"Dear Mick," read the invitation. When it arrived in my inbox several weeks ago, I was immediately suspicious: Yes, I was being offered an honorary award, complete with a gala Manhattan ceremony. But this salutation was not just wrong; it was strangely loaded. As TNR readers may recall, I recently had a hostile run-in with the pulp science-fiction author and global-warming denier Michael Crichton, who, as payback for a critical article I wrote about him, had classily placed a character named Mick Crowley in his latest novel—like me, a journalist; unlike me, a kiddie rapist (See "Cock and Bull," December 25, 2006). Pondering the invitation, I couldn't help but wonder if a Crichton minion might be laying some new trap for me. Then I noticed something even odder. The invitation purported to come from an Irish-American group. Was I being called Mick—or *a* Mick? The paranoid mind ran amok.

It turned out to be an innocent misunderstanding. The author of the e-mail, a young editor with *Irish America* magazine, graciously assured me that no pun had been intended with the "typo." Typo? This seemed more Freudian slip than errant keystroke. But never mind. He had come not to bury me but to praise me: I was experiencing the honor of being named one of the magazine's Top 100 Irish-Americans of the year. There was just one small hitch: I'm not Irish.

Well, I'm fractionally Irish. Crowley is a distinctly Gaelic last name. One genealogy website calls it an anglicization of *O Cruadhlaoich*, from the words *cruadh* ("hardy") and *laoch* ("warrior")—which will amuse those who have observed me in the wilderness or getting a tetanus shot. My surname is probably my most Irish trait. My blood is only one-quarter Irish, on my father's side. By most definitions, I am a Connecticut WASP—more Southampton than South Boston. I regret to say that I probably have less in common with the Irish than with those who once tried to bar them from polite society.

Luckily, *Irish America* was unconcerned about my 75 percent non-Irishness, provided I was "proud of [my] Irish roots." That was a little awkward, as it had never previously occurred to me to be proud of my Irish roots. But, if my ancestry was exciting to someone else, well, who was I to protest? What's more, it's not easy being a WASP nowadays. In our meritocratic, "American Idol" culture, anti-elitism is running high. So I figured some rebranding as a scrappy ethnic underdog couldn't hurt. I told *Irish America* I'd be honored to accept the award.

And why not? Everyone else in Washington is plumbing their own secret ancestry. No political career is complete anymore without some startling genealogical bombshell: George Allen is the world's most unlikely Jew; Barack Obama's ancestors owned slaves; Al Sharpton's great-great-somethings were owned by Strom Thurmond's great-great-somethings; John Kerry's real family name is Kohn. (The Boston Irish always suspected he wasn't really one of theirs.) Soon "oppo" researchers will traffic in divorce records and nucleic acids with equal ease.

Besides, being thought a proper Irishman can open doors. A Boston politico's secretary once promised to pass on a message because "Crowley is a good Irish name." But the knife cuts both ways. After I appeared on a cable talk show recently, I received a rambling voicemail screed from one ornery viewer clearly familiar with the origins of the Crowley name. "I know you're one of those low-class Irish who never moved past the New Deal Democrats," he sneered. Now that really got my blood boiling. A quarter of it, anyway.

Prejudice will always endure. But the Irish-American image did dodge a bullet this month when federal prosecutors in Boston said they won't charge the former state Senate president, William "Billy" Bulger, for obstructing efforts to locate his brother, the notorious fugitive gangster "Whitey" Bulger. You couldn't make this pair up. Whitey spent years as an FBI informant, despite his role in an alleged 19 murders. Meanwhile, Billy was the most powerful figure in state politics. The dark comedy crescendoed in 1991, when Whitey "won" a $14 million state lottery jackpot. (Luck of the Irish, indeed.) In 1995, he fled the country. Billy claims ignorance of his brother's whereabouts—and, moreover, denies any obligation to help locate him. Fine. But how about some Powerball picks?

I can, at least, say that I've visited Ireland. Amazingly, that country now ranks as the European Union's richest nation, measured by GDP per capita. The attendant development and gentrification hasn't entirely snuffed out the land of *Angela's Ashes*, however. At a pub I visited in the coastal town of Dingle, an extremely drunk man was harassing other patrons with menacing stares, random outbursts of shouting, and occasionally sitting down at the tables of alarmed strangers. A local wearily explained to me that no one would throw out the drunk—he was a former IRA man and prone to violence. Moreover, he had a good heart: Earlier in the night, he'd walked home a priest too drunk to make it back on his own.

Last month, my journey into a state of full, celebrated Irishness was complete when I arrived in midtown Manhattan for the *Irish America* awards ceremony. A lapel sticker in the form of a green four-leaf clover was my pass to the VIP area—which featured a robust open bar, naturally. The guest of honor: Hillary Clinton, who has expertly cultivated close ties to New York's powerful Irish community. (When I interviewed Clinton a few days later for a separate article, I sought to bond with her over our favored status among the Irish; the effect passed quickly.) With bagpipes blaring nearby, however, I felt like an imposter mingling amid more authentic members of my clan: redheads with fierce green eyes; jolly men with white hair and ruddy cheeks; men wearing noble police and fire department uniforms. I think they sensed I didn't belong there. But at least no one called me Mick. ◆

Michael Crowley

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In the new issue of the Hoover Digest . . .

Crossing to Safety in Latin America

Crime is robbing the region of talent, jobs, and its role in the global economy.

Criminal activity in Latin America is the bane of rich, middle class, and poor alike. It steals pesos from the shopkeeper and economic opportunities from the well educated. It makes neighborhoods unwalkable and diverts thousands of jobs into unproductive private security. Moreover, it feeds on itself. The police are often criminals themselves, easily corruptible and with no incentive to make things better.

Many people in the region are resigned to crime, as if it were inevitable in modern economies and societies. But the U.S. experience shows that to be false: when more criminals began to be caught and sent to prison, crime dropped. Latin American leaders can purge crooked cops and make sure new ones do the job they were hired for—while paying them well, to keep them away from bribery and other corrupt acts. It is also critical to improve earnings from and availability of legal jobs, especially for workers at the low end of the job spectrum. In the long run, a good education for young people from poor families would help most of all.

—Gary S. Becker

How to Turn Iran Upside Down

Tehran's weakened hard-liners yearn for a U.S. attack. Why oblige them?

The already tense U.S.-Iran relationship is now a tinderbox. The Islamic Republic trains and supports Hezbollah and Hamas; it provides aid and explosives to Iraqi Shiite militias who attack American soldiers; and, most alarming, it seems determined to develop a nuclear bomb. Bombing Iran, however, would not resolve any of these dangers—it would worsen them.

But where military strikes would fail, a different approach would succeed. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is neither the most powerful official in Iran nor beloved by the Iranian people. He has not delivered on his campaign pledges to fight corruption or improve the lot of the working classes and the poor. The authoritarian regime is not united behind Ahmadinejad, who knows there is only one thing that could bring the people back to him—a U.S. military attack. Rather than throw the reactionaries a lifeline, the United States should offer to negotiate unconditionally. Then, if Ahmadinejad says no, he would have to face a different foe: his own angry public.

—Abbas Milani, Larry Diamond, and Michael McFaul

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The #1 killer of teenagers *doesn't have a trigger.*

IT HAS A STEERING WHEEL.

Motor vehicle crashes are the #1 cause of death for teens in America. They take nearly 6,000 young lives and injure another 300,000 teens every year. Those numbers remain unacceptably high, despite safer cars, better roads and decades of safe-driving programs. We think it's time for a change.

So The Allstate Foundation has developed a new, nationwide program: "Keep the Drive." It mobilizes *teens* to become safe-driving activists by involving them in designing a new safe-driving program. And it uses the power of peer influence to help teens think and act smarter every time they get into a car — as a driver or a passenger.

Peers are some of the most important influences in getting teens to drive more safely. "Keep the Drive" can help them realize that **smart driving is the key to keeping their licenses, their cars, their friends and their futures.**

To learn more about this issue and what you can do to help, go to ProtectTeenDrivers.com. If you're a parent, you'll also find a link to the **Allstate Parent-Teen Driving Agreement.** Use it to help you and your teen set driving limits and make smarter decisions on the road.

It's time to make the world a better place to drive.
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